NATION

India rejects China's objection to PM's AP visit

>> Page: 4 <<

BUSINESS

Google, ECI tie up to prevent spread of false info during polls

>> Page: 7 <<

SPORTS

Pant declared fit as keeper-batter for IPL

>> Page: 8 <<

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساہ روزنامہ بنگلور

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Karnataka hikes DA for employees from 38.75% to 42.5%

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

The Karnataka government on Tuesday approved the revision of Dearness Allowance (DA) for state government employees from the existing 38.75 per cent to 42.5 per cent. The announcement comes weeks before the Lok Sabha elections. The DA will be revised from 46 per cent to 50 per cent for the employees drawing central pay scales, an official statement said. "This change represents a significant financial commitment of Rs. 1792.71 crores every year, reaffirming our dedication to our employees," Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on 'X'. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Cong releases 2nd list for LS polls

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Congress General Secretary KC Venugopal on Tuesday announced the second list of 43 candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls in which some prominent names including Kamal Nath's son Nakul Nath, Ashok Gehlot's son Vaibhav Gehlot and Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi have been mentioned. Addressing the press conference, KC Venugopal said, "In this list, out of the 43 candidates, 10 are General candidates, 13 OBC candidates, 10 SC candidates,nine ST candidates and one Muslim candidate." A total of 12 candidates have been announced from Assam, 10 from Madhya Pradesh, seven from Gujarat, 10 from Rajasthan, three from Uttarakhand and one from Daman and Diu. In Madhya Pradesh, the Congress has fielded Nakul Nath who is the son of a senior party leader Kamal Nath from the Chhindwara constituency. Phool Singh Baraiya has been fielded from Bhind, whereas Pankaj Ahirwar will contest from Tikamgarh. *—ANI*

>>>More on Page 3

Khattar out, Saini in; BJP tie cracks in Haryana

Manohar Lal Khattar quit as CM along with cabinet ministers

CHANDIGARH, 12 MARCH

Haryana BJP Chief Nayab Singh Saini was on Tuesday sworn in as state's new chief minister, hours after the surprise resignation of Manohar Lal Khattar from the post along with his cabinet ministers.

Five MLAs -- four from BJP and one independent -- were also sworn in as ministers. However, former home minister and six-term MLA from Ambala Cantt, outgoing Home Minister Anil Vij, has not found a place in the new cabinet.

Saini, the 54-year-old OBC leader, was administered oath by Governor Bandaru Dattatreya at the oath-taking ceremony held at the Raj Bhawan here.

BJP's Kanwar Pal, Mool Chand Sharma, Jai Prakash Dalal and Banwari Lal and Independent MLA Ranjit Singh Chautala took oath as ministers. All the five were ministers in the outgoing Khattar cabinet.

Dushyant Chautala, Davinder Babli and Anoop Dhanak of JJP were other ministers in the Khattar cabinet. Vij, who is learnt to be sulking, was not present at the oath-taking ceremony. After the party meeting here, he headed straight to his Ambala residence.

Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya administers the oath to BJP leader Nayab Singh Saini as Chief Minister of Haryana *PHOTO: PTI*

- Five MLAs -- four from the BJP and one independent -- were also sworn in as ministers. However, former home minister and six-term MLA from Ambala Cantt, outgoing Home Minister Anil Vij, has not found a place in the new cabinet

The development to bring in a new face as chief minister by the BJP came just weeks ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. Khattar's second term as chief minister was also to end in October, when the Assembly polls are due.

Earlier in the day, Khattar and all 13 other members of BJP-led council of ministers submitted their resignations as a team of the party's central observers arrived in Chandigarh. The switch in Haryana came amid the ruling BJP-JJP coalition coming apart, though party leaders from both sides did not make immediate comment.

At present, BJP has 41 MLAs in the 90-member Assembly while JJP has 10. BJP is comfortably placed even without the JJP's support as the Khattar government enjoyed the support of six independents. Khattar's stepping down - and that of his ministers - followed a breakdown of the ruling BJP-JJP alliance over failed seat-sharing talks for the Lok Sabha election.

In the past, BJP has changed out chief ministers, and reshuffled cabinets before elections to ward off anti-incumbency factor. Saini, who is the MP from Kurukshetra, was appointed chief of state BJP in October 2023.

Reportedly, Khattar may be fielded as Lok Sabha candidate from Karnal.

JJP too called a meeting in Delhi of its leaders. Five of its Haryana MLAs are learnt to have skipped the meeting. Earlier, emerging from the BJP meeting at Haryana Niwas, Vij parried questions from reporters on what transpired inside. "Those who have come from Delhi will tell," he said. *—PTI*

SACRED MONTH BEGINS

Muslims break the first fast of Ramadan at Masjid Al Noor, Dickenson Road, in Bengaluru on Tuesday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

Pandemic cut life expectancy by 1.6 yrs: Study

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Global life expectancy dropped by 1.6 years between 2019 and 2021 during Covid pandemic, a sharp reversal from past improvements, according to research published in The Lancet journal.

The study found that life expectancy declined in 84 per cent of countries and territories. This demonstrated the "devastating potential impacts of novel pathogens", the researchers said.

Mexico City, Peru and Bolivia experienced some of the largest drops, the study found.

The researchers also found an increase in adult mortality rates. However, child mortality continued to drop amid Covid, albeit more slowly than in earlier years, with half a million fewer deaths among children. The researchers said stark differences in child mortality persisted regionally, with one in every four children who died globally living in South Asia.

The researchers estimated that the global death rate jumped among people aged over 15 years -- by 22 per cent in men and 17 per cent in women -- from 2019 to 2021.

Roughly 131 million people died globally from all causes in 2020 and 2021 combined, of which the pandemic caused about 16 million. *—PTI*

NEW BEGINNING

BJP's Jayaprakash Hegde, two others join Congress

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

K Jayaprakash Hegde, Chairman of Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes, and two former MLAs, BM Sukumar Shetty and MP Kumaraswamy, who were earlier with BJP, on Tuesday joined Congress weeks before Lok Sabha polls.

Hegde -- a former MLA, MP and minister -- as the Chairman of the Commission for Backward Classes, submitted the much awaited Socio-Economic and Education Survey report, popularly known as the "caste census", to the government on 29 February. He is likely to be Congress candidate from Udupi-Chikmagalur Lok Sabha constituency, according to party sources.

Hegde was earlier with BJP, and during the tenure of previous BJP government he was appointed as the Chairman of the Commission. He had earlier unsuccessfully contested from the Udupi-Chikmagalur seat in 2009 and 2014 on a Congress ticket.

Jayaprakash Hegde *PHOTO: X*

- He had won the seat in 2012 by-poll for Congress, after DV Sadananda Gowda vacated it to become the chief minister

He had won the seat in 2012 by-poll for Congress, after BJP's DV Sadananda Gowda vacated it to become the chief minister.

Hegde, a noted political figure, had previously represented the Brahmavar Assembly constituency, twice and independent and once from erstwhile Janata Dal. He served as the minister of ports and fisheries in the then Janata Dal government and played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Udupi district, carved out of Dakshina Kannada.

Former BJP MLAs -- BM Sukumar Shetty, who represented Byndoor Assembly Constituency in 2018, and Kumaraswamy, who represented Mudigere Assembly segment thrice -- too joined the Congress on Tuesday. Both of them were denied tickets by the BJP in the 2023 assembly polls. They were with Congress in the past. *—PTI*

INDIA REMAINS WORLD'S TOP ARMS IMPORTER

LONDON, 11 MARCH

India remains the world's top arms importer and its imports increased by 4.7 per cent between 2014–2018 and 2019–2023, Swedish think tank, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said in a new report on Monday.

Russia continued as India's main arms supplier, SIPRI said, adding around 55 per cent of arms imports by European states in 2019–23 were supplied by the US, up from 35 per cent in 2014–18. "India was the world's top arms importer.

Its arms imports increased by 4.7 per cent between 2014–18 and 2019–23," the think-tank said.

"Although Russia remained India's main arms supplier (accounting for 36 per cent of its arms imports), this was the first five-year period since 1960–64 when deliveries from Russia (made up less than half of India's arms imports," it said. *—PTI*

SBI submits electoral bonds details to EC

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

State Bank of India (SBI) on Tuesday evening submitted to the Election Commission (EC) the details of entities which had purchased the now-scrapped electoral bonds and political parties which received them, as it complied with the Supreme Court order to furnish information.

The Supreme Court on Monday ordered SBI to disclose the details of electoral bonds to the Election Commission by close of business hours on 12 March. As per the order, the EC will have to publish the details shared by the bank on its official website by 5 pm on 15 March.

"In compliance of the Hon'ble Supreme Court's directions to the SBI, contained in its order dated 15 February & 11 March, 2024 (in the matter of WPC NO 880 of 2017), data on electoral bonds has been supplied by the State Bank of India to the Election Commission of India, today, 12 March, 2024," EC said on X.

According to sources, SBI has complied with the orders of the apex court and submitted the details of the electoral bonds to the Election Commission. The SBI has issued electoral bonds worth Rs 16,518 crore in 30 tranches since the inception of the scheme in 2018.

The Supreme Court, however, in a landmark verdict on February 15 scrapped the Centre's electoral bonds scheme that allowed anonymous political funding, calling it "unconstitutional" and ordered disclosure by the EC of donors, the amount donated by them and recipients.

State Bank of India *PHOTO: PTI*

- The Supreme Court on Monday ordered SBI to disclose the details of electoral bonds to the Election Commission by close of business hours on 12 March

Such bonds had no serial number or any other identifier, he said, adding, the purchase and deposit processes did not allow the SBI to record any identifier of a specific electoral bond for its purchaser or depositor.

The first sale of electoral bonds took place in March 2018. Electoral bonds were to be redeemed exclusively by an eligible political party through an authorised bank account, and the SBI is the sole authorised bank for issuing these bonds. *—PTI*

India slams China over 'veto' blocking in UNSC

UNITED NATIONS, 12 MARCH

India has condemned the countries that use their veto powers to block evidence-based terrorist listings at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

"The practice is uncalled for and smacks of double-speak to the council's commitment to tackling the challenge of terrorism," said India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj.

Kamboj's remarks appeared to be a veiled reference to the Council's permanent and veto-wielding member China that has repeatedly blocked or put technical holds on bids by India and supported by other Council members under the 1267 Al Qaida Sanctions Committee to blacklist Pakistan-based terrorists.

In June last year, China blocked a proposal by India. *—PTI/ANI*

Top court halts board exam for classes 5, 8, 9, 11 in Karnataka

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Supreme Court on Tuesday halted the board examinations which are currently underway in Karnataka State schools for classes 5,8,9 and 11. It set aside an interim order of Karnataka High Court's division bench order allowing the state government to conduct board exam.

A bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and Pankaj Mithal stated that the State's move to conduct board exams for those classes was prima facie in violation of Section 30 of the Right to Education Act which bars such exams.

"You have spoiled the entire education system of the country and now you want to complicate it. Please do not do that," the court told Karnataka government.

Supreme Court *PHOTO: PTI*

- A bench of Justices stated that the State's move to conduct board exams for those classes was prima facie in violation of Section 30 of the Right to Education Act which bars such exams

Senior Advocate Devadatt Kamat representing Karnataka argued that the exams which are being held are not board examinations in the strictest sense but only a 'summative assessment' that students are not required to pass.

The government scheme is that no student can be detained based on this exam while at the same it would allowing them to be assessed, he added.

The Bench then asked what purpose exams would serve, to which Kamat replied that it prepare students academically and also ensures that they would be able to face the actual board exam.

Kamat stressed that the single-judge order staying the exams was patently illegal as the State is the competent authority to conduct summative assessments which is a policy matter.

It directed the High Court to dispose of the matter before it expeditiously, given the urgency in the matter. *—Bar and Bench*

NOTICES ISSUED TO OPPN

4 years later, CAA protests erupt in Assam again

GUWAHATI, 12 MARCH

Protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) erupted across Assam on Tuesday.

Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP) burnt the effigies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah in Lakhimpur.

Assam Police have issued notices to Opposition parties, asking them to withdraw the hartal over CAA, and warned that "legal action" will be taken against them if they fail to follow the diktat, officials said on Tuesday.

Congress led by Leader of the Opposition in Assembly Debabrata Saikia protested in front of its State headquarters Rajiv Bhawan in Guwahati and burnt copies of the Act. The 12-hour 'Sarbatamak Hartal', called by the 16-party United Opposition Forum Assam (UOFA), did not evoke much response.

Activists of the All Assam Students Union (AASU) staged a protest after the central government notification *PHOTO: PTI*

Shops and businesses remained closed in a few districts such as Sivasagar, Golaghat, Nagaon and Kamrup. Criticising the notices issued by the Assam Police, Congress leader Debabrata Saikia said it was "shameful that the state police department was acting at the behest of BJP government". In Sonitpur, the district administration has imposed Section 144 of CrPC and prohibited the holding of meetings, demonstrations, processions and sloganeering in public places to prevent any untoward incident.

Security has been tightened with additional deployment of police, including commandos, in sensitive areas, while all police stations in the state have been put on an alert.

Patrolling has been intensified and check-posts have been set up on arterial roads in almost all the cities and towns.

All Assam Students' Union and 30 non-political indigenous organisations will also take out torchlight processions in the evening and launch a satyagraha from Wednesday. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Govt launches portal for citizenship

New Delhi, 12 March

Ministry of Home Affairs on Tuesday launched a portal for people eligible to apply for Indian citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) 2019, an official spokesperson said. Applicants for Indian citizenship under CAA can submit any of nine documents, including valid or expired passport, ID cards and land tenancy records. A mobile app 'CAA-2019' will also be launched shortly. *—PTI*

Man attacks youth over inter-caste marriage

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

A man attacked and stabbed a 22-year-old youth from a different case after he married his daughter at Melapur, Srirangapatna taluk, in Mandya district. JP Anand was upset with his daughter for marrying Shashank of a different caste. Anand and his accomplices attacked the youth and stabbed him with a knife. The attack resulted in severe injuries, causing Shashank's intestines to protrude. He was admitted to a hospital in Mysuru and was battling for his life. Srirangapatna rural police arrested Anand and 8 others on Monday evening. *—Salar News*

Deer carcass concealed in abandoned house

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

The carcass of a deer was found concealed in an abandoned house at Chikkathoguru in Nagarhole National Park. The deer came near Chikkathoguru, and a few people chased it and killed it for meat. Fearing Forest Department officials, they hid it in the house which is near an elephant-proof trench. Upon receiving information about the incident, forest officials reached the spot. By the time they arrived, the perpetrators had fled the scene. Forest officials have registered a case. *—Salar News*

Dalit youth kills girlfriend's father

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

A Dalit youth allegedly murdered the father of a woman after he objected to their relationship, at Bhagavathi village in Bagalkot district on Tuesday. Praveen Kamble was in a relationship with the daughter of 52-year-old Sanganagouda Patil, who belonged to an upper caste, warned Kamble to stay away from his daughter. Kamble held a grudge against Patil for obstructing their relationship. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: SALAR

Davangere hosts bodybuilding competition

DAVANGERE, 12 MARCH

Davangere hosted the South India bodybuilding competition on Monday, attracting participants from across the State, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Chennai, Puducherry, and Kerala. The event was organised by Manju Mogaweera, an international athlete and bodybuilder, for the second time. The participants were provided with accommodation and meals. Participants had to register for the competition with a fee of Rs 200 at the district level, Rs 500 at the state level, and Rs 1,000 at the South India level. The winner bagged a Rs 1 lakh cash prize. The first and runner-up were awarded Rs 25,000. *—Salar News*

Ashoka hints BJP may replace some old-timer MPs

Nalin Kumar, Anantkumar Hegde, Pratap Simha might not get ticket

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka, Anantkumar Hegde and Pratap Simha ***PHOTO: PTI***

BJP's list of candidates for Lok Sabha elections may have a few surprises with some incumbent MPs being replaced, senior party leader R Ashoka indicated on Tuesday.

Asked about reports on sitting MPs Nalin Kumar Kateel from Dakshina Kannada, Anantkumar Hegde from Uttara Kannada and Pratap Simha from Mysuru may not get re-nomination, Ashoka said, "Sitting MPs must have hope and work, the decision of the high command is final. No one should lose hope, there are chances till the last minute."

He said the central leadership has taken on board the opinion of the State leaders about the candidates during the Central Election Committee meeting on Monday night and would decide on the nominees and make an announcement soon.

It was probably the last such meeting to discuss potential candidates from State, he said, adding, that nominees for almost all the seats have been finalised. It is now for the central leadership to take the final call and make the announcement in one or two lists.

> **No one should lose hope, there are chances till the last minute**
>
> -R Ashoka, Leader of Opposition in the Assembly

BJP swept the 2019 elections in the State bagging 25 out of 28 seats.

On reports that a few sitting MPs may not fielded to make way for new faces, he said candidate selection may depend on performance, political situation in the constituencies, and also caste combinations.

On speculation regarding Mysuru royal scion Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar getting a party ticket from Mysuru seat, he said, " I don't know. I have not contacted Yaduveer or spoken to him. Whether others have contacted, I don't know about it."According to sources, discussions were also held regarding shifting Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje from Udupi-Chikmagalur to the Bengaluru North segment.

The constituencies, which should be left for JD(S), were also discussed at the meeting. Reportedly, JD(S) may contest in three seats -- Mandya, Hassan and Kolar. *—PTI*

NIGHTMARE FOR MANY

Bengaluru blood banks are facing shortage

Without an adequate supply of blood, patients face delay in receiving life-saving treatments ***PHOTO: PIXABAY***

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

The City Blood Bank is facing a nearly 50 per cent shortage of blood which is causing significant challenges for patients who need blood.

Donors are avoiding blood donation due to concerns about Covid cases, as well as college students being busy with exams and vacations.

This reluctance to donate has led to a situation where blood banks are seeing only one person walking in to donate in a month, exacerbating the crisis. The scarcity of blood is creating a nightmarish scenario for thousands of patients who require transfusions for various medical conditions.

Without an adequate supply of blood, these patients face delays in receiving life-saving treatments and may experience worsening health conditions. Speaking to **Salar News**, the Staff at the St John's hospital said, "We need 150 blood donors, and we have been waiting for the donors for over two weeks, and it is difficult to treat patients."

Mobile blood donation drives, public campaigns, and incentives for donors have been reduced in the City over the past two months. The Lion's blood bank said, "Earlier we used to have 3,500 units of blood in a month and now we have 500 units of blood, and every day we get the request for nearly 150 to 200 patients in need of blood."

Another blood bank from the City Red Cross Blood bank said, "After Covid, we have seen low turnout in the blood donation, and we have only college students' blood support drive to collect the blood, and we do not have any other drives to rely on." However, blood banks in City have expressed concerns about a significant drop in blood donations outside of the college season.

During periods when colleges are in session, there is typically an increase in blood donations due to student participation in donation drives. *—Salar News*

Cops seek Interpol's help on bomb threats

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

PHOTO: PTI

- A day after a low-intensity blast at Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru on 1 March, the officials received the bomb threat

City police have sought Interpol's help to find out the origin of a bomb threat email sent to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, other ministers and senior government officials last week.

"As it is Proton mail (encrypted), we have sought information from Interpol through Criminal Investigation Department and Central Bureau of Investigation," City Police Commissioner B Dayananda said.

A day after a low-intensity blast at The Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru on 1 March, the ministers and officials received the bomb threat email demanding a ransom of $2.5 million (around Rs 20 crore). Having a subject line of 'Explosion alert 02"', the mail stated: "What are your thoughts on the movie trailer? If you don't provide us with 2.5 million dollars, we will cause large explosions on buses, trains, temples, hotels and public areas throughout Karnataka."

The email, referring to Karnataka State Road Transportation Corporation's luxury bus Ambari Utsav, said, "We want to show you one trailer where we are going to explode the next one in the Ambari Utsav bus. After the Ambari Utsav bus blast, we will raise our demands on social media and put up screenshots of the mail sent to you on social media." *—Salar News*

TO CURB MALPRACTICE

PROPERTY DOCUMENTS TO BE LINKED WITH AADHAAR

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

Govt has introduced auto mutation of property documents where details get updated in the database automatically ***PHOTO: PTI***

State government will link Aadhaar with 'Cadastre' to curb malpractice, said Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda on Tuesday. Cadastre or Pahani is the register recording the ownership of properties and other details.

The government has also introduced auto mutation of property documents where details get updated in the database automatically. If the property owner has taken loans, or the debts have been paid off, or if the property has been divided or if the property has been pledged, all such changes will be automatically updated in the Cadastre, and District Revenue Officer need not approve these changes.

Of the 14,21,116 property-related registrations that happened in the State over the last six months, Revenue Department has updated 72 per cent of them automatically and the remaining 28 per cent has remained in the old system. "The 28 per cent cases included properties that are under dispute in civil courts. In such cases, 15 days will be provided to the applicants or the department to raise any objections. Once the automation of the others is completed, these cases will be also automated," Gowda said.

Sub-registrar offices to be open on Sundays

All sub-registrar offices across the State and some offices under BBMP jurisdiction will be open on Sundays, Gowda said.

People who want to visit sub-registrar offices to get their work done usually have to take leave as it is a weekday. To make it more convenient for the public, "we have decided to keep the offices open on all seven days of the week," Gowda said.

Each revenue village will have at least six to seven sub-registrar offices. Based on a roster, each of them will work on Sunday on rotation. *—PTI*

6 DRUG PEDDLERS ARRESTED, ₹44LWORTH OF NARCOTICS SEIZED

BENGALURU, 13 MARCH

The City police arrested six drug peddlers and three foreign drug peddlers and seized Rs 44 lakhs from the peddlers on Tuesday. Addressing the press conference, Bengaluru City commissioner B Dayananda said, as part of the Central Crime Branch CCB drug bust operations the CCB arrested the drugs peddlers from Yelanka, KG Nagar, Hennur, Rajagopalnagar and Rammurthy naga. During the search operation the police seized 54 grams of MDMA, 410gm Hydro Ganja, 18 kgs of Ganja along with four phones were seized. *—Salar News*

27 women, institutions get Kittur Rani Awards

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

State government honoured 27 women and institutions with Kittur Rani Chennamma Awards as part of International Women's Day celebrations at Jawaharlal Bal Bhavan in Cubbon Park on Tuesday.

The main award, titled 'Veera Mahila', was given to Mangala Marakale, the head of Mangala Women's Rural Development Society, Bidar, for her contribution towards women's welfare.

The event was inaugurated by Minister for Women and Child Development Lakshmi Hebbalkar. Of the 27 awards, 20 were given to individuals and 6 were for institutions working for the welfare of the women. Vachana Vaibhav from Bagalkot (folk culture art), Veena Umesh Kidadala from Dakshina Kannada (fine arts), Rumana Kausar from Kolar (sports), Kaveri Shivashankaraiah Hiremat from Vijayapura (education), and Shubha Vishnu Sabahita from Belagavi (literature) were among the women who were honoured.

The event also honoured three best-performing Stree Shakthi Self Help Groups (SSHGs): Basaveshwara Streeshakti Swa-Sahaya Sangha from Ramadura taluk (Belagavi), Kalloni Streeshakti Gumpu from Sulya taluk (Dakshina Kannada), Annapoorneshwari Streeshakti Swa-Sangha Tiptur taluk (Tumakuru).

Hebbalkar said Kittur Rani Chennamma Awards, which was established in 1994-95, serve as a beacon of inspiration, acknowledging the exemplary service of institutions and individuals. *—Salar News*

Cauvery Phase 5 to begin from 15 May: BWSSB

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

The water supply to 110 villages and other areas in Bengaluru under Cauvery Stage V will start on 15 May, said Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) Chairman Ram Prasath Manohar on Tuesday.

The project is expected to provide 775 million litres per day. Now, the water required for BWSSB till June 2024 has been stored in the Cauvery basin, Manohar said. The drying up of 6,900 borewells in the City has created a shortage of 250 MLD (million litres per day) of water.

The corporation has identified 313 locations to drill borewells, and 1,200 dried-up borewells will be drilled at a greater depth again, the chairman said.

The corporation will hold a meeting with largeconsumers of water, including industrialists to discuss not using Cauvery water for construction and instead using treated wastewater. The department has developed an app called Janasnehi to order treated water.BWSSB has placed 582 tankers with a capacity of 1,000-3,000 litres to provide drinking water in slum areas and others. *—Salar News*

PURPLE LINE SERVICES HIT AFTER MAN ENTERS VIADUCT AREA

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

PHOTO: PTI

Namma Metro services on Purple Line in the City were briefly interrupted after a man allegedly entered a viaduct near Kengeri Metro Station on Tuesday.

Around 2.30pm, the metro officials spotted an unauthorised person on the viaduct, Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) said. The officials cut off the power block supply and suspended the services for 20 minutes between Kengeri and Rajarajeshwari Nagar stations. *—Salar News*

Cong leader booked for remarks against PM

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

A Congress leader was booked on Tuesday for allegedly making derogatory remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Police registered an FIR against GS Manjunath, President of Labour Welfare Board, based on a complaint by Kalleshaiah, President of Chitradurga Rural BJP Mandal.

The complaint alleged that Manjunath's comments have tarnished the Prime Minister's Office and have the potential to disrupt societal peace. Police have invoked sections 504 (intentional insult to provoke) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of Indian Penal Code against the accused.Manjunath made objectionable statements about Modi while commenting on the reduction of LPG prices by Rs 100. His remarks, captured in a viral video, have drawn criticism from Karnataka BJP. *—Salar News*

CONG WORKER KILLED, HANGED FROM TREE

GADAG, 12 MARCH

A Congress worker was killed and hanged from a tree near Dambala village in Mundaragi taluk of Gadag district.

The deceased is Sharanappa Sandigoudra, a local Congress leader from Doni village, police said on Tuesday.

A group of killers waylaid Sandigoudra when he was going on a bike. They attacked him and he fell off the vehicle.

The killers threw chilli powder into his eyes and stabbed him with sharp-edged weapons. Later, they hung his body from a tree and escaped from the spot.

Congress had organised a convention of the beneficiaries of guarantee schemes at Dambala village and the incident had created tension in the area. *—Salar News*

'Firms trapping rural women in debt'

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

The release highlighted that since they are not able to pay out the loans they are taking their children out of school ***PHOTO: PIXBAY***

The Women's Forum against Illegal Practices in Micro Finance, Karnataka on Tuesday claimed that in the guise of providing financial support, the micro-finance groups or micro-credit institutions are drowning women in debt. They alleged that the government is not taking any action against them.

According to the press releases, the failure of public sector banks and RBI to provide loans at low interest rates is primarily responsible for the mushrooming of private credit agencies on such an extensive scale.

The micro-financing institutions have placed a greater burden of debt on the shoulders of rural women which is greater than their poverty. The study done across the country shows how women who are working day and night to repay their debts and many of them are leaving their villages and even being driven to commit suicide unable to bear the pressure.

The release further highlighted that since they are not able to pay out the loans they are taking their children out of school and forcing them to work to pay the loans.

Under the banner of the Women's Forum, the organisation is trying to build a campaign through public dialogues, conversations with women's organisations and documentation of the lived experiences of impacted women across the State to urge the government to take action against micro-financing institutions. *—Salar News*

'NO CRISIS RIGHT NOW'

Water crisis might not affect IPL matches in City

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

Water from the sewage treatment plant inside M Chinnaswamy Stadium will be used to water the pitch ***PHOTO: PTI***

The acute water shortage in the City might not pose any immediate threat to the three IPL (Indian Premier League) first-leg matches to be played in Bengaluru, as KSCA, the host association, is confident of meeting the demand for water from the in-house sewage-treatment plant.

Bengaluru is reeling under a severe water crisis, the worst in the last four decades, and there have been calls from several quarters to shift the IPL games, beginning here on 25 March, out of the City.

"We are facing no crisis – at the moment that is. We have received the State government order about water usage and we are in constant meetings about following the guidelines," Shubendu Ghosh, the CEO of Karnataka State Cricket Association, said.

Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board had issued a notice, barring the usage of potable water for any other purpose such as gardening or washing vehicles.

Ghosh exuded confidence that water from the sewage treatment plant inside the M Chinnaswamy Stadium will suffice for purposes like watering the outfield and pitch. "We are already using water from the STP plant for watering the outfield and pitch and other in-stadium purposes. We may require 10,000-15,000 litres of water for match purposes, and we are certain that it can be generated from the STP plant. We don't need to use groundwater. We are having a closer look at the government's new policy on water usage, but we are confident of meeting all the points in the order," Ghosh said.

In the first IPL match of this season, local franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru will take on Punjab Kings on 25 March, and four days later they will face Kolkata Knight Riders. In the third match at home, RCB will be up against Lucknow SuperGiants on 2 April.

The officials of Royal Challengers, a pioneer in green initiatives like reviving the City's lakes, also sounded confident about conducting the matches despite the water scarcity in the city. "We are aware of the situation and are in touch with the KSCA office-bearers. But we have another two weeks in hand before the first match here. So, we are confident of a smooth conduct of matches. The venue also complies with the norms of National Green Tribunal, so a system is already in place to tackle such scenarios," said an official on conditions of anonymity. *—PTI*

ED raids Lalu's aide in home-buyer's funds fraud case

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday raided multiple premises in Delhi-NCR as part of a money laundering investigation against a realty and liquor group promoted by Amit Katyal, an alleged "close associate" of RJD chief Lalu Prasad's family, official sources said. Katyal was arrested by the central agency last year in the alleged railways land-for-jobs scam involving Prasad, his wife Rabri Devi, son and former deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav, MP daughter Misa Bharti and some other children. A total of 27 premises of Haryana-based Krishn Buildtech Pvt Ltd in Delhi, Gurugram and Sonipat are being searched under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the sources said. The company is promoted by Amit Katyal and Rajesh Katyal. The probe pertains to alleged siphoning of homebuyer's fund worth Rs 400 crore by the promoters of the company and parking them abroad, they said. The agency alleged that Amit Katyal sent more than Rs 200 crore of homebuyer's funds to Sri Lanka. —PTI

LS polls: DMK allots Madurai and Dindigul to CPI(M)

CHENNAI, 12 MARCH

Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK on Tuesday announced that CPI(M) will contest from Madurai and Dindigul and the CPI from Nagapattinam and Tiruppur constituencies in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. The announcement came a month after the ruling party allotted two seats each to the Left parties, who are part of the alliance with Congress and a few other parties. CPI(M) leaders led by State Secretary K Balakrishnan, CPI State Secretary R Mutharasan and others called on Chief Minister and DMK President MK Stalin at the Dravidian party's headquarters 'Anna Arivalayam' here today and signed formal agreements regarding the seats. The ruling DMK had allotted two seats each to the CPI(M), CPI and VCK and one each to the IUML, KMDK and MDMK.The DMK has earmarked nine seats in Tamil Nadu besides the lone segment in Puducherry to the Congress party. The DMK is set to contest in 21 seats. —PTI

ED raids Jharkhand Cong MLA in money laundering case

RANCHI, 12 MARCH

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday carried out searches against Jharkhand Congress MLA Amba Prasad and some others allegedly linked to her as part of a money laundering investigation, official sources said. About 17-18 premises in Ranchi and some other cities of the state were being covered, the sources said. The 36-year-old legislator represents the Barkagaon assembly seat in Hazaribag district. A clutch of FIRs related to alleged illegal sand mining, extortion and some other crimes have formed the basis of the ED action being undertaken under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the sources said. —PTI

Court extends Manish Sisodia's judicial custody

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

A Delhi court on Tuesday extended the judicial custody of jailed AAP leader Manish Sisodia in a corruption case related to the alleged Delhi excise scam. Special Judge MK Nagpal extended Sisodia's custody till 22 March after he was produced before the court on the expiry of his remand. The judge passed the order after the CBI counsel claimed that investigation was at a crucial stage, and if released on bail, Sisodia may hamper the ongoing probe or flee from justice. The judge also heard arguments on an application filed by some accused in the case objecting to the commencement of arguments on the framing of charges. The accused moved the application following CBI's submission that it may file a supplementary chargesheet. —PTI

BJP seals Andhra poll pact with TDP and JSP

BJP gets 6 LS, 10 Assembly seats; TDP 17 and 144

AMARAVATI, 12 MARCH

Andhra Pradesh NDA partners finalised their seat-sharing formula for Lok Sabha and state polls following a discussion on Monday, under which BJP will contest six Lok Sabha and 10 Assembly seats while TDP will fight 17 parliamentary and 144 state seats.

Under the deal, Pawan Kalyan's JanaSena will contest two Lok Sabha and 21 Assembly seats, TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu announced after the meeting.

Senior BJP leader and Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat went into a huddle with Naidu and Kalyan in Amaravati to finalise seat-sharing for the upcoming parliamentary and Assembly elections.

"With this significant step, the people of Andhra Pradesh now stand on the threshold of reclaiming our state and paving the way for a brighter future. I humbly call upon my people of Andhra Pradesh to shower their blessings upon this alliance, and grant us a historic mandate to serve them," said Naidu in a post on X.

TDP's N Chandrababu Naidu and BJP's Baijayant Panda meet to discuss seat adjustments, on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

The state has 25 Lok Sabha and 175 Assembly seats. JanaSena was initially supposed to contest 24 assembly and three Lok Sabha seats, but in the seat-sharing formula it got 21 Assembly and two Lok Sabha seats, after TDP joined NDA alliance recently.

2024 polls will be the first time the three parties are contesting the polls together. Back in 2014, when TDP and BJP fought the polls together, JanaSena was their outside ally. TDP and JanaSena have announced the names of 100 candidates already, and Naidu said the respective parties will name other candidates soon.

According to TDP supremo, the Monday brainstorming exercise sought to forge a formidable combination of seats for every alliance partner that truly represents the people of Andhra Pradesh and their aspirations.

Meanwhile, TDP sources said that the state's Opposition party have invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend an election meeting which could take place between 17 and 20 March. —PTI

DEFENCE PROWESS

Modi sees 'Bharat Shakti' exercise at Pokhran

POKHRAN, 12 MARCH

As awestruck spectators watched the 'Bharat Shakti' exercise here in Rajasthan on Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Pokhran has become witness to the trinity of India's 'aatmanirbharta', belief and self-pride.

The integrated tri-service firepower and manoeuvre exercise was held for about 50 minutes at the Pokhran field firing range where India showcased the prowess of its indigenous defence equipment. Roars of LCA Tejas and ALH Mk-IV filled the air while Main Battle Tank Arjun, and K-9 Vajra, Dhanush and Sharang artillery gun systems ruled the firing ranges on ground.

Platforms like Pinaka satellite system and a swarm of drones left the audience spellbound. Modi in his address on the occasion said that "the roar of aircraft mid-air, and valour displayed on ground during Bharat Shakti exercise is the call of a 'new India' (naye Bharat ka aavhan hai)".

Narendra Modi visits Pokhran to witness the 'Bharat Shakti' tri-services exercise, in Jaisalmer on Tuesday **PHOTO: ANI**

He recalled that it was at Pokhran that the India's nuclear test was conducted in the past. "Pokhran has become witness to the trinity of India's 'aatmanirbharta (self-reliance)', belief (vishwas) and self-pride (aatma-gaurav)," Modi said.

The exercise was held around 100 km from Jaisalmer city, with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in attendance. This first-of-its-kind exercise on such a scale is "not tailored towards any direction (northern or western border) or any adversaries", sources in the defence establishment said.

"In a clear indication of India's readiness to confront and overcome contemporary and future challenges with home-grown solutions, 'Bharat Shakti' highlights resilience, innovation and strength of India's domestic defence capabilities on the global stage," the Prime Minister's Office said. —PTI

SC raps Himachal rebel MLAs

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked six rebel Congress MLAs, who had cross-voted in the recent Rajya Sabha polls in Himachal Pradesh, as to why they have not moved the High Court challenging their disqualification.

Himachal Pradesh Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania had on 29 February disqualified the six MLAs on the Congress' plea for "defying" the party whip that required them to be present in the House and vote for the budget.

When the counsel said the petitioners have explained the reasons in the petition and they were elected as MLAs, the bench observed, "That is not a fundamental right".

"It is rare case where within 18 hours, the Speaker disqualified us," the counsel said.

The bench posted the matter for hearing on 18 March.

These Congress rebels, who had voted in favour of BJP nominee Harsh Mahajan in the Rajya Sabha polls on 27 February, later "abstained" from voting on the Budget. Senior Congress leader Abhishek Singhvi had lost the Rajya Sabha election owing to the cross-voting.

The disqualified MLAs are Rajinder Rana, Sudhir Sharma, Inder Dutt Lakhanpal, Devinder Kumar Bhutoo, Ravi Thakur and Chetanya Sharma.

Following their disqualification, the effective strength of the House has gone down to 62 from 68, while the number of Congress MLAs has shrunk to 34 from 40. The rebel MLAs, in their petition, have alleged violation of the principle of natural justice, claiming they did not get adequate opportunity to respond to the disqualification petition. —PTI

Cong names 43 in 2nd LS list, fields Nakul from Chindwara

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Congress General Secretary KC Venugopal on Tuesday announced the second list of 43 candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls in which some prominent names including Kamal Nath's son Nakul Nath, Ashok Gehlot's son Vaibhav Gehlot and Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi have been mentioned.

Addressing the press conference, KC Venugopal said, "In this list, out of the 43 candidates, 10 are General candidates, 13 OBC candidates, 10 SC candidates,nine ST candidates and one Muslim candidate."

A total of 12 candidates have been announced from Assam, 10 from Madhya Pradesh, seven from Gujarat, 10 from Rajasthan, three from Uttarakhand and one from Daman and Diu.

In Madhya Pradesh, the Congress has fielded Nakul Nath who is the son of a senior party leader Kamal Nath from the Chhindwara constituency. Phool Singh Baraiya has been fielded from Bhind, whereas Pankaj Ahirwar will contest from Tikamgarh.

Other names that have been announced are Rajendra Malviya from Dewas, Radheshyam Muvel from Dhar, Porlal Kharte from Khargone, and Ramu Tekam from Betul.

In Assam, Gaurav Gogoi has been fielded from the Jorhat Lok Sabha seat.

Mallikarjun Kharge with Sonia Gandhi, KC Venugopal and others during meeting for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls **PHOTO: PTI**

Rahul Kaswan who joined Congress after quitting BJP has been fielded from Rajasthan's Churu. Kaswan is a sitting MP from Churu.

Vaibhav Gehlot, the son of former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has been fielded from Jalore Lok Sabha seat. With the announcement of 43 candidates, Congress has so far declared names on 82 Lok Sabha seats. —ANI

RS 150 CR AT STAKE

Congress has challenged the dismissal of its plea by ITAT against the imposition of penalties **PHOTO: PTI**

Cong's asset freeze: HC reserves order

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Delhi High Court on Tuesday reserved an order on a plea moved by Congress which sought a stay on the Income Tax notice for recovery of more than Rs 105 crore as outstanding tax.

The Congress has challenged the dismissal of its plea by the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) against the imposition of penalties for discrepancies in certain tax returns.

On Friday, the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) dismissed the stay plea against the Income Tax Department proceedings of recovery and freezing of their bank accounts.

The Division Bench of Justice Yashwant Verma and Justice Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav after hearing the submissions at length decided to reserve the order.

During arguments the bench orally observed and asked the petitioner Congress party if somebody had gone out asleep in the petitioner's office since 2021 it seems.

"The offer to deposit 20 per cent was made in 2021, there's a complete disregard to the system. The entire matter has been very badly handled by you (petitioner)," the bench observed.

The bench also stated that there does not appear to be any fundamental infirmity on the ITAT order passed on Friday.

The Income Tax Appellate Tribunal on Friday dismissed the plea moved by the Congress Party which sought a stay against Income Tax Department proceedings of recovery and freezing of their Bank accounts and said the Stay Application is without merit. —ANI

Govt bans Jammu Kashmir National Front under UAPA

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

The government on Tuesday imposed a five-year ban on the Jammu Kashmir National Front (JKNF), a constituent of the hardline Hurriyat Conference, under the stringent anti-terror law for sowing seeds of disaffection among people and engaging in activities detrimental to the country's security and sovereignty.

In an order, the Ministry of Home Affairs declared the JKNF headed by Nayeem Ahmad Khan an "unlawful association" with immediate effect under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The order will have effect for a period of five years.

Khan was among the first separatist leaders to be arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in a terror funding case. Arrested on 24 July, 2017, he is currently in judicial custody.

In its order, the government said the JKNF is indulging in unlawful activities, which are prejudicial to the integrity, sovereignty, and security of the country.

It said members of the JKNF have remained involved in supporting terrorist activities and anti-India propaganda for fuelling secessionism in Jammu and Kashmir and providing logistic support to terrorists in the Union territory. —PTI

CAA STORM IS BACK

Himanta vows to resign if unqualified individuals get citizenship

GUWAHATI, 12 MARCH

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said that he will be the first to resign even if one person, who has not applied for the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the state, gets citizenship.

His comment comes after protests erupted across Assam with Opposition parties flaying BJP at the Centre for implementing the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA) on Monday, paving the way for granting citizenship to undocumented non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

The protesters are claiming that lakhs of people will enter the state after the implementation of the CAA.

"People do not want to identify themselves as foreigners. There may be 50,000-60,000 applications from three districts of Barak Valley while it will be negligible in districts of Brahmaputra Valley," he said. There is nothing new about the CAA as it was enacted earlier, the chief minister said, adding that "now the time has come for application on the portal".

"The data on the portal will speak now, and it will become clear whether the claims of those opposing the Act stand factually correct or not," Sarma said.

People of Assam will know in a month whether lakhs of people or a few thousand are applying for citizenship in the state, he said.

The chief minister said he respects both the protesters and also the supporters of the Citizenship Amendment Act but "enough has been said on CAA and now it is time to prove the claims". —PTI

Himanta Biswa Sarma **PHOTO: PTI**

People do not want to identify themselves as foreigners. There may be 50,000-60,000 applications from three districts of Barak Valley while it will be negligible in districts of Brahmaputra Valley

-Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam Chief Minister

Fear, uncertainty loom over Shaheen Bagh residents

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Fear and uncertainty loomed over the residents of southeast Delhi's Shaheen Bagh area, a day after the Centre notified the rules of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

With the recent notification of the rules, persecuted non-Muslim migrants — Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Christians — from these nations are now eligible for Indian nationality.

Locals in the area said they feel the implementation of CAA could adversely impact the Muslim population. On the first day of Ramadan, the area was peaceful, with men clad in kurta-pyjama and skull caps, heading to the local mosque for the afternoon prayers.

Shaheen Bagh was the epicentre of protests against the CAA for nearly 100 days in 2019-2020. Many residents refused to speak to the media, saying they could be targeted for speaking against the current regime.

According to a police officer, around 500 security personnel have been deployed in the area to avoid any possibility of unrest. "We have deputed a team of police personnel at different points in the area to do regular patrolling. So far, the situation is under control also because of Ramadan. We are not expecting any agitation," a policeman deployed in the area said.

The locals said they are unhappy with the Centre's decision to notify the CAA after their relentless struggle to fight against the "undemocratic" Act. "Ramadan has started, so most of the residents in the area are busy with preparations. But in our heart, we feel anger and anguish that our struggle (anti-CAA protests during 2019-20) has gone wasted. If it was not for Ramadan, we would have protested again," a resident said on the condition of anonymity. Another local, Mohammad Sajid, said they are scared and unsure of what will happen to them now. "By implementing CAA, the government is trying to silence our voice and push us aside," he said. —PTI

Demonstrators attend a protest against the new citizenship act, at Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi on Monday **PHOTO: ANI**

We are scared and unsure of what will happen to them now By implementing CAA, the government is trying to silence our voice and push us aside

-Mohammad Sajid, resident

Plea in SC seeks stay on CAA

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

An application was filed in the Supreme Court on Tuesday seeking a direction to the Centre to stay the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Rules, 2024 till the pendency of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 before the apex court. The application was filed a day after the Centre implemented the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019. The application, filed by the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), which is one of the petitioners who have challenged the citizenship law, has sought the court's direction to ensure no coercive action is taken against people belonging to the Muslim community pending adjudication of the writ petitions. —PTI

CAA in WB sets stage for political manoeuvring

KOLKATA, 12 MARCH

The implementation of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) just ahead of Lok Sabha polls is anticipated to intensify communal polarisation, significantly influencing the electoral discourse in West Bengal with both Opposition BJP and TMC poised to reap political dividend out of it.

Bengal BJP views CAA as a pivotal issue in the upcoming polls, particularly in Matua-dominated constituencies, foreseeing an advantageous position for the party. Conversely, TMC leaders acknowledge the CAA's potential to shape the electoral narrative but intend to leverage it to highlight their stance against BJP's perceived "anti-Bengali" sentiments. Political analysts suggest that CAA's impact could be significant, particularly in 12-15 constituencies, including those with Matua and minority influences in North and South Bengal. —PTI

MP wedding procession accident toll rises to six

RAISEN, 12 MARCH

One more person injured in the accident during a wedding procession died in Madhya Pradesh's Raisen district, police said on Tuesday. With this, the death toll in the accident has risen to six and 11 injured people are undergoing treatment in hospitals, Superintendent of Police (SP) Vikas Shahwal said. A truck allegedly overtaking from the wrong side ploughed into a wedding procession in the Sultanpur area of the district on Monday night, he said. The procession had arrived at Khamaria Ghat from Anchalkheda village of Narmadapuram district, he said. Five people, including the groom's minor brother and labourers carrying lights, were killed on the spot and 25 others were injured, the official said. The truck initially hit the horse, which the groom, Vishram Singh Ahirwar,26, one of his hands got crushed under the truck, he said. *—PTI*

20 injured in stray dog attack in Himachal's Bilaspur

BILASPUR, 12 MARCH

Twenty people were injured after being attacked by a stray dog in Ghumarwin area here, an official said on Tuesday Municipal Council Ghumarwin President Rita Sehgal said the dog would suddenly pounce on the people passing by and bite them.The incident occurred on Monday night when a stray dog bit several people within the span of a few hours near Gandhi Chowk in the Ghumarwin market.The injured were sent for treatment at a local hospital and have been administered anti-rabies vaccines, Sehgal added. According to the civil hospital authorities, dog attack incidents have increased in the past few days.*—PTI*

Gangster marries 'Madam Minz' amid heavy security

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

The marriage of gangster Sandeep alias Kala Jathedi with "history-sheeter" Anuradha Choudhary alias Madam Minz was held under heavy deployment of police force at a banquet hall here in Dwarka on Tuesday.Sandeep, facing around two dozen of criminal cases and lodged in Tihar jail, was brought in a police van under heavy security at the venue which had already turned into the fortress with door frame metal detectors, drones and deployment of SWAT (Special Weapons and Techniques) commandoes of Delhi Police. *—PTI*

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Ed Sheeran returns to India for his second concert after 7 years

MUMBAI, 12 MARCH

Singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran, who is in India for his second concert tour, spent the first day of his India trip on Tuesday by visiting a school and playing music for young children here. The 33-year-old singer, the singer's cocert, part of his "+ - = ÷ x Tour", is slated to take place this Saturday in Mahalaxmi Race Course Grounds, Mumbai."So I just arrived in Mumbai, India. We're going to be visiting some schools today and playing some songs. I heard the kids have something to play for me as well," Sheeran said in a video on his Instagram account. During his trip to the school, the singer is seen sitting in the crowd and enjoying the performance of young children before taking up his guitar and playing "Shape of You" for his young audience. *—PTI*

India rejects China's objection to PM's AP visit

China says it lodged a protest over Arunachal visit

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was felicitated by Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu during his visit to Itanagar, on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

India on Tuesday strongly rejected China's objection to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Arunachal Pradesh, and asserted that the state "was, is, and will" always be an integral and inalienable part of India.

External affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the Chinese side has been made aware of this "consistent position" on several occasions.

Objecting to such visits by Indian leaders to Arunachal Pradesh or India's developmental projects in the state does not stand to reason, he said.

"We reject the comments made by the Chinese side regarding the visit of the prime minister to Arunachal Pradesh," he said.

China on Monday said it lodged a diplomatic protest with India over Modi's visit to Arunachal Pradesh last week, and reiterated its claim over the region by saying India's moves will "only complicate" the unresolved boundary question.

Jaiswal said China's objection to such visits will not change the reality that Arunachal Pradesh "was, is, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India."

"Indian leaders visit Arunachal Pradesh from time to time, as they visit other States of India. Objecting to such visits or India's developmental projects does not stand to reason," he said.

"Further, it will not change the reality that the State of Arunachal Pradesh was, is, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India," Jaiswal said.

"Chinese side has been made aware of this consistent position on several occasions." he added.

Jaiswal was responding to media queries on the Chinese objection to Modi's visit to Arunachal Pradesh.

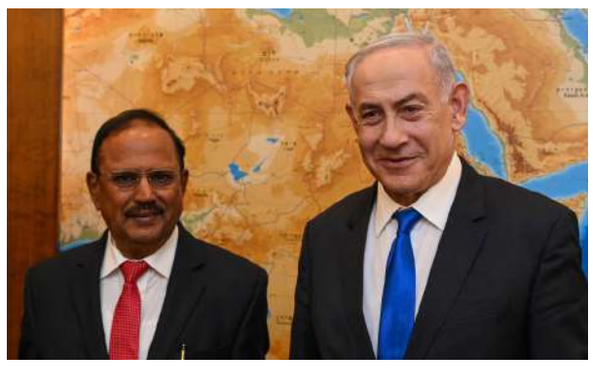
China, which claims Arunachal Pradesh as South Tibet, routinely objects to Indian leaders' visits to the state to highlight its claims. Beijing has also named the area as Zangnan

—PTI

WAR IN GAZA

Doval-Netanyahu talk on humanitarian assistance

JERUSALEM, 12 MARCH



Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval met Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu *PHOTO: X*

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval has called on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to discuss regional developments and the urgent need to address the issue of humanitarian assistance to Gaza which is facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity.

"Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met today with Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and updated him on recent developments in the fighting in the Gaza Strip," the Israeli Prime Minister posted on X from his official handle.

More than 30,000 Palestinians were estimated to have been killed during the operation in Gaza, which Israel launched in response to the October 7 attack by Hamas militants that left approximately 1,200 Israelis dead and about 250 taken hostage.

The sides also discussed the effort to release the hostages and the issue of humanitarian assistance," he said.The Israel-Hamas conflict has created a growing humanitarian crisis,

- UN has warned that at least 576,000 people across the Gaza Strip - one-quarter of the population - are facing food insecurity

and the UN has warned that at least 576,000 people across the Gaza Strip - one-quarter of the population - are facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity. Western countries have pressed Israel to expand land deliveries by facilitating more routes and opening additional crossings.

Doval also met his Israeli counterpart Tzakhi Hanegbi, who was also present during the meeting with Netanyahu.Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been constantly in touch with the important leaders in the region, such as the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan, and is actively involved in discussions to promote peace and stability in the region.India has supported efforts to provide necessary humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian population in Gaza sending consignments of essential items.

—PTI

India-Russia discuss thermonuclear research

T'PURAM, 12 MARCH

India and Russia are in discussions to collaborate on a range of activities including research on controlled thermonuclear fusion and joint development of the transit potential of the Northern Sea route, a top official of the state-run atomic energy corporation in Moscow, Rosatom, has said.

AE Likhacheva, CEO of Rosatom said the main topic of discussion with India was on the prospects of further cooperation in the field of nuclear technologies and in non-energy and non-nuclear areas.

Likhacheva, who visited the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KNPP) in Tamil Nadu last month, said both sides have gained enormous experience in cooperation during the construction of KNPP's first units.

"Already, our cooperation extends beyond the borders of India.

Indian companies are participating in Rosatom's project to build the first nuclear power plant in Bangladesh - Rooppur NPP," he told PTI in an email interview.

Additionally, Rosatom was developing a considerable number of new areas of activity --about 80 of them--and in many of them it was ready to share its developments with friendly countries.

"Thus, we can offer the Indian side our competencies in the construction of low-power nuclear power plants," he said.

—PTI

PREZ RECEIVES HONORARY DOCTORATE

PORT LOUIS, 12MARCH

President Droupadi Murmu was on Tuesday conferred with the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law by the University of Mauritius, demonstrating the depth of bilateral ties.

Murmu, 65, is here on a three-day state visit during which she will be the chief guest at the country's National Day celebrations on Tuesday. Murmu exhorted Mauritian youth to stay connected with India to nourish their proud past and invest in their bright future, it said. She conveyed best wishes from India on Mauritius' National Day. "I feel honoured to receive the honorary degree from this prestigious university today." she said. *—PTI*

NO CASUALTY

Tejas aircraft crashes in Jaisalmer

JAISALMER / NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

A Tejas aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) in flames after it crashed during an operational training sortie, near Jaisalmer *PHOTO: PTI*

A Tejas light combat aircraft (LCA) of the Indian Air Force crashed near a residential colony in Jaisalmer on Tuesday during an operational training sortie, the first such incident involving the indigenously-built jet since its induction around eight years back. There were no casualties.

The pilot ejected safely and a court of inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the accident, the IAF said in a brief statement.

The crash took place around 100km from the Pokhran desert in Rajasthan where a mega war game 'Bharat Shakti' witnessed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top military brass was underway.

Military sources said the jet, belonging to the IAF's No 18 squadron or 'Flying Bullets', was one of the three Tejas aircraft which were to be part of the war-game in Pokhran.

A video showed that the aircraft glided at low altitude and was eventually up in flames after hitting the ground shortly after the pilot ejected safely from the jet. Thick black smoke was seen billowing from the single-storey brick structure. Scores of people stood at a distance as remains of the plane smouldered. *— PTI*

74-year-old trampled to death by wild elephant in Tamil Nadu

ERODE, 12 MARCH

A 74-year-old man was trampled to death by a wild elephant in the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve here on Tuesday morning, forest officials said.

According to villagers of Diginarai in Thalavady forest range located within Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR) here, Mathiya,74, of Geerahalli area, went to a private land on Monday night to carry out his duties as a watchman of the land to prevent the entry of wild animals which would damage the standing crops.

He noticed an adult elephant entering the land, and burst crackers to scare it. However, the tusker retaliated and trampled him to death on the spot, forest officials said.

Hearing the elephant's trumpet and Mathiya's cries, the locals rushed to the spot where they found him motionless with injuries from the trampling.

PHOTO: X

Kerala driver dies after sambar deer hits autorickshaw

A 38-year-old auto driver died on Tuesday when a sambar deer hit his three-wheeler near Kothamangalam in Ernakulam district when he was ferrying passengers to a hospital, police said.The incident occurred at around 2.30am, police said.

When the deer crashed into the autorickshaw, the vehicle overturned and the victim came under it. He was rushed to a nearby hospital, but died on the way, police said, adding that the three passengers escaped unhurt.

The deer escaped into the forest after hitting the vehicle, the police said.A police officer said that the road where the accident took place was bordered by forests on both sides and animals, including elephants, are known to commonly cross it.

- A 38-year-old auto driver died on Tuesday when a sambar deer hit his three-wheeler near Kothamangalam in Ernakulam district when he was ferrying passengers to a hospital

A local resident of the area told, people had sought some kind of fencing to be erected along the road, but the authorities have not heeded to their concerns. *—PTI*

MAN THREATENS TO SHOOT NITISH KUMAR, HELD

PATNA, 12 MARCH

The police on Tuesday arrested a 25-year-old man, who was seen in a recent video on social media, threatening to shoot Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Law and Order (Patna) Krishna Murari Prasad said the accused was tracked down and arrested from his home at Barh on the outskirts of the city.The deputy SP said, "We learnt about the video on February 14 and a case was lodged immediately at Kotwali Police Station. Two co-accused were arrested earlier."The police produced the main accused before a court and he is being sent to jail, Prasad said. *—PTI*

Odisha women to get 25 leaves per year

BHUBANESWAR, 12 MARCH

PHOTO: X

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday announced casual leave of 25 days in a year for women employees working in different departments of the state government.

The women employees would now get an additional 10 days of Casual Leave taking their total Casual Leave in a year to 25 days, an official said.

An official release issued by the Chief Minister's Office said Patnaik took this decision keeping in mind the family responsibilities and various problems of women.

The state government also said that Odisha was the first in the country to take radical steps like reserving 33 per cent of government jobs for women in the 90s.

Recently, the Odisha government had also announced 15 days of casual leave in a year for employees in various non-government-aided educational institutions. The women block grant employees of different educational institutions have also been granted paid maternity leave of 180 days for two births. *—ANI*

'70 pc of glaucoma cases go undetected'

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Around 11.2 million people aged 40 years and above in India have glaucoma but only 20 per cent of them are aware of it, experts said on the World Glaucoma Day on Tuesday.

The numbers can be more as more than 70 per cent of cases go undetected.

Dr Ikeda Lal, senior Cornea, Cataract and Refractory Surgery Specialist, at the Delhi Eye Centre and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital here said glaucoma is a group of eye conditions that damage the optic nerve, leading to progressive vision loss.Glaucoma typically presents with no symptoms in its early stages, making regular eye examinations crucial for early detection."However, as the condition progresses, you may experience blurred vision, difficulty adjusting to low light, reduced peripheral (side) vision, and seeing halos around lights. Few patients may even experience eye pain and headache. If you notice any of these symptoms, it's important to see an eye doctor for a comprehensive eye exam," Dr Lal said. Lal said glaucoma becomes more common with advancing age. Family history and genetics play a role, with individuals having relatives affected by glaucoma being at a higher risk. Dr Rohit Saxena, Professor at AIIMS, Delhi said majority of the patients with glaucoma are not aware of disease. *—PTI*

'ONCE NOT PRACTICABLE'

Voter IDs made debut 30 years after opposition

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

The identity cards are now acceptable as proof of address too *PHOTO: PIXABAY*

First mooted in 1957, the Electors Photo Identity Card made its nationwide debut over three decades later in 1993 to prevent voter impersonation in elections. What the Election Commission once thought was "not practicable to operate satisfactorily on a large scale", has become a mainstay in India's election system. The identity cards are now acceptable also as proof of identity and address.

A pilot project to issue photo identity cards for voters was undertaken in the Calcutta (South West) Parliamentary constituency for a by-election in May 1960, but it did not succeed and the project was shelved for almost two decades.

It was during the 1979 assembly elections in Sikkim that photo identity cards were issued and it was subsequently implemented in other northeastern states such as Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland.

This was a precursor to the nationwide launch of Electors Photo Identity Cards in 1993.

According to the book "Leap of Faith" published by the Election Commission to document the journey of polls in India, the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 1958, had an interesting provision of introducing photo identity cards.

India's first Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sukumar Sen, before his retirement, had the satisfaction of seeing the bill introduced in the Lower House of Parliament by his younger brother and then Union law minister Ashoke Kumar Sen on 27 November, 1958.

The Bill was enacted into law on 30 December, 1958, within days of KVK Sundaram becoming India's second CEC. Sundaram was also the longest-serving CEC, from 20 December, 1958, to 30 September, 1967.

In its report on the 1962 Lok Sabha polls, the poll panel said that soon after the general elections of 1957, it was suggested that issuance of identity cards with photographs attached to all electors in congested urban areas would greatly facilitate identification at the time of poll and avoid impersonation.

The Election Commission tried it as an experimental measure in the Calcutta South-West Parliamentary constituency in which a by-election was then due.

In spite of strenuous efforts spread over a period of 10 months, only 2.13 lakh electors out of a total of 3.42 lakh could be effectively photographed, and identity cards with photographs attached could thereafter be issued only to 2.10 lakh.

—PTI

RAMADAN: MONTH OF DIVINITY

Indonesian Muslims attend an evening prayer called 'tarawih' marking the first eve of the holy fasting month of Ramadan, at Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta, Indonesia
PHOTO: PTI

CAA and India's flip-flop over refugee policy

India's refugee policy is back in the spotlight after the Central government has announced plans to enact a controversial citizenship law that has been criticised for being anti-Muslim. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) will allow non-Muslim religious minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan to seek citizenship. The new law will affect the Rohingya Muslims.

The Rohingya Muslims are seen by many of Myanmar's Buddhist majority as illegal migrants from Bangladesh. Fleeing persecution at home, they began arriving in India during the 1970s and are now scattered all over the country, with many living in squalid camps.

In August 2017, a deadly crackdown by Myanmar's army sent hundreds of thousands of them fleeing across the border.

According to Human Rights Watch, in 2017 an estimated 40,000 Rohingyas are in India - at least 20,000 of them are registered with the UN Human Rights Commission.

Rights groups have criticised India for its attempts to deport the refugees instead of offering them asylum.

Rohingya Muslims are seen by many of Myanmar's Buddhist majority as illegal migrants from Bangladesh
PHOTO: ANI

How does India deal with refugees? What impact does it have?

India does not have a national policy or a law to deal with refugees.

India is not a signatory to international laws such as the 1951 UN Convention and the 1967 Protocol, which secure the rights of refugees to seek asylum and protect them from being sent back to life-threatening places.

Experts say this leads to an "ad-hoc and arbitrary" manner of dealing with refugees irrespective of the party in power.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), refugees and asylum-seekers primarily live in urban India – 46 per cent are women and girls, and 36 per centre children.

An absence of documents can mean that refugees coming to India "have no access to basic facilities like healthcare, education and employment", says Suhas Chakma, director of think-tank Rights and Risks Analysis Group.

Refugees recognised by the Indian government can get access to education, healthcare, jobs and housing in camps.

But those registered with UNHRC get little protection in their daily lives and often do not get residential permits from the government, human rights lawyer Nandita Haksar said earlier this year.

What does law say about dealing with refugees?

Chakma says India doesn't have a procedure that allows refugees to seek asylum and those entering the country without a visa are treated as illegal immigrants under the Foreigners Act or the Indian Passport Act.

The only protection they have is the right to life under Article 21 and protection against arbitrary abuse of power under Article 14 of the constitution.

In 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government passed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which offers amnesty and expedites the path to Indian citizenship for non-Muslim "illegal immigrants" from the neighbouring countries, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

But the law was widely criticised and triggered protests across the country. Political parties, civil society and Muslim groups said the law went against secular values enshrined in the constitution.

How are refugees treated in India?

The country's ad-hoc policy means all refugees do not get the same treatment.

"[Such] decisions are taken based on geopolitical and political considerations of the state and national governments," Chakma says.

India supported Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence from Pakistan and took in tens of thousands of refugees from there.

Journalist Nirupama Subramanian pointed out that in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, Sri Lankan Tamil refugees were provided an allowance by the state government and allowed to seek jobs. After the end of the civil war in 2009, Tamil refugees could consult an agency like the UNHCR and decide whether they wanted to return.

India has for years supported the Dalai Lama and Tibetan refugees who followed him into exile and sought asylum in the country after a failed anti-China uprising in 1959. In 2018, after Modi's summit with Chinese President XI Jinping in Wuhan, India's foreign ministry discouraged government officials from attending events where the Dalai Lama or Tibetan officials were present.

But the relationship between the two countries worsened after a 2021 face-off along their disputed border in the Himalayan region.

In January, when China expressed concern over Indian lawmakers attending an event hosted by the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile, Delhi called their comment "inappropriate".

In the case of the Rohingya refugees, the country's decision to deport some men in 2017 sparked an international outcry.

Rajnath Singh, then the home minister, insisted they were not refugees or asylum-seekers but "illegal immigrants.

Analyst Subir Bhaumik had told the BBC then that the community had become "a favourite whipping boy for the Hindu right-wing to energise their base".

The UN special rapporteur on racism, Tendayi Achiume, said later that India risked breaching its international legal obligations by returning the men to possible harm and that it was "a flagrant denial of the refugees' right to protection".

What does India need to do to have a fair policy?

"Successive governments have often said it's an issue of national security," Chakma says.

In some cases, the Supreme Court stepped in to stop deportations if it found that they did not pose any threat or if sending them back could put their lives at risk.

Chakma says India needs a legal framework so that refugees who enter the country are able to register themselves and access protections against arbitrary detentions.

—BBC News

SALAR ساڈھ بنگلور

Stigma mars survival of lymphatic filariasis patients

Imagine carrying 10 to 20 kg of dead weight on your foot or arm every day of your life. Now imagine being stigmatised for it, losing dignity, respect and the ability to work. That's how life is for many thousands of people suffering from lymphatic filariasis, a neglected tropical disease commonly known as elephantiasis.

With 40 per cent of the global case load, India is amongst the countries most affected by the disease caused by parasitic worms and transmitted to humans through infected mosquitoes. It is mostly concentrated in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where lymphatic filariasis has historically been a public health worry due to various factors, including population density, poverty and limited access to healthcare services.

A mass drug administration (MDA) programme has been key in the strategy to control LF in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Besides, patients with more than 40 per cent disability have been issued unique disability IDs that give them a monthly pension of Rs 400.

Beyond the numbers though is the stark reality of living with a disability that is not reversible and no cure, leaving many women in particular alone and abandoned by their families.

At 65, Kaushalya Devi, who can barely manage to move with a massively swollen left leg, finds that lymphatic filariasis has robbed her of any agency over her life. And it is not just about her physical limitations.

"Over a period of time, I lost any and every decision making power in my family. Then my husband and my children started getting irritated with me and moved out. I now stay alone and work as a domestic worker to make ends meet," Kaushalya, from Meenapur village in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district, told PTI.

Kaushalya, who manages to make about Rs 80-100 a day depending on the work she gets, has got a disability card that gives her Rs 400 a month. But it's just not enough, she said.

When lymphatic filariasis develops into chronic conditions it leads to lymphoedema (tissue swelling) or elephantiasis (skin/tissue thickening) of limbs and hydrocele (scrotal swelling).

Meena Kausar lives not too far away.

The social stigma associated with the disease is the most difficult aspect to live with, the 34-year-old said, echoing Kaushalya

"I wear saris and not salwar kurtas to hide my feet. People stare and some even consider us manhoos' (cursed). We are not called to weddings or auspicious occasions. This is a disease caused by mosquito bites but how many people know that."

"When an acute attack occurs, it feels like one is going to die," she said, recounting the agonising pain attack every week or 10 days. Acute attacks in lymphoedema denote sudden and intense bouts of swelling, inflammation, and discomfort in the affected limb or area. Typically occurring in individuals with chronic lymphoedema, these episodes can be triggered by factors like infection, trauma, overuse, climate changes, or hormonal fluctuations.

Meena said it is a very expensive disease to manage.

"I've borrowed Rs 2.5 lakh for my treatment, and to repay the loan, I work as a farm worker, earning just Rs 80 per day. Moreover, my disability limits my ability to work to just three-four hours a day, leaving me with no other viable means of income."

Men, too, confront their own trials.

Ram Sagar Bharat, once a hopeful 20-year-old young man with dreams of joining the army, now grapples with the debilitating effects of filariasis.

Now 60 years old, Bharat has developed lymphoedema and both legs have been infected and he can't move without support. But he has to pay back a loan of Rs 2 lakh and has to continue to work as a daily labourer in the field in Sher village in Bihar's Gopalganj district. Dr Rakesh Kumar, chief medical officer in Meenapur village, said the only thing that can be done for these patients is to mitigate the progression of the disease.

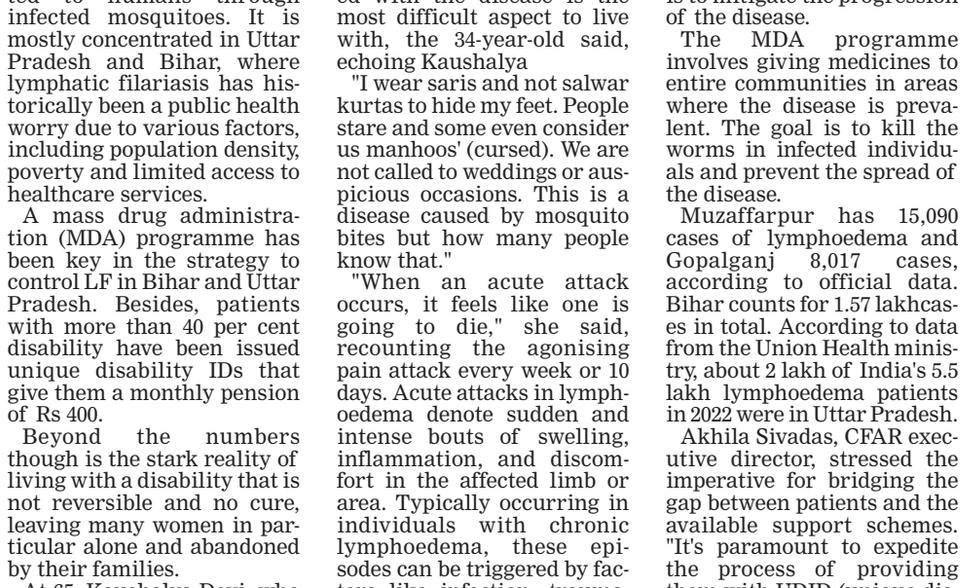
The MDA programme involves giving medicines to entire communities in areas where the disease is prevalent. The goal is to kill the worms in infected individuals and prevent the spread of the disease.

Muzaffarpur has 15,090 cases of lymphoedema and Gopalganj 8,017 cases, according to official data. Bihar counts for 1.57 lakhcases in total. According to data from the Union Health ministry, about 2 lakh of India's 5.5 lakh lymphoedema patients in 2022 were in Uttar Pradesh.

Akhila Sivadas, CFAR executive director, stressed the imperative for bridging the gap between patients and the available support schemes. "It's paramount to expedite the process of providing them with UDID (unique disability ID) cards and facilitate access to their pensions and assistive devices like callipers and western commodes... Furthermore, efforts should be made to integrate them into income-generating activities, skill development programmes and supportive ventures such as small enterprises," she said.

India has committed to eliminating lymphatic filariasis by 2027, three years ahead of the global target through a multi-partner and multi-sector targeted drive.

—PTI



Acute attacks in lymphoedema denote sudden and intense bouts of swelling, inflammation, and discomfort in the affected limb or area
PHOTO: PIXABAY

LETTERS

Write to us at salar@salar.news

Climate crisis forces women to choose between uterus & livelihoods

In the semi-arid lands of Maharashtra's Beed district, women face a stark choice -- endure hysterectomies or risk losing their livelihoods.

Climate-induced droughts have ravaged the region, pushing families into poverty and forcing women to migrate in search of work in sugarcane fields.

The demanding nature of this labour, coupled with exploitative employment conditions, forces women to get their uterus surgically removed to avoid missing work and incurring financial penalties, according to a new paper from the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

Lata Waghmare, who migrates to Karnataka with her husband every year to work as cane cutters, said she delivered her second baby in a sugarcane field, scared of taking a leave post-delivery because of "khada (leave)" charges.

"The penalty for skipping one day's work is in the range of Rs 500 to Rs 1,000. I got back to work five days after the delivery. To feed the baby, I carried her to the field with me," she told IIED.

"While carrying the cane bundles, I kept her on the floor in one corner. The tractor ran over my baby. I lost my child," she added.

The 34-year-old Dalit woman returned to work the following day, unable to take leave to grieve.

"I bled for a month after the delivery. In March 2010, I went to Beed and got my uterus removed. (The) doctor told me that lifting heavy bundles and not taking rest post-delivery led to the bleeding," she said.

Hysterectomies of this kind are still taking place despite widespread outcry in the country. The procedure, performed mostly in private clinics, can leave women with lasting pain and mental health problems.

Researchers surveyed 423 households in two different areas of Beed for the paper titled "Women Paying the Cost of Climate Crisis with their Wombs".

Of the total, people from 253 households migrated to work in the sugar industry.

The majority of those migrating for work said they cut sugarcane during the harvest season. Local labour contractors -- known as "mukkadams" -- typically hire husband-and-wife teams or "jodis" to work in pairs, not through formal contracts but informal agreements.

A typical day for these labourers involves shifts ranging from 12 to 16 hours, throughout the six-month harvest period. Men will usually cut the cane while the women will tie and stack bundles. These pairs are often subjected to wage deductions for work missed, creating a fear of taking any leave.

A typical day for these labourers involve shifts ranging from 12 to 16 hours, throughout the six-month harvest period
PHOTO: PIXABAY

Jayashree Owhal, a 45-year-old cane cutter from Kathawada village in Beed district, told the researchers, "My (menstrual) cramping became unbearable after a point. I went to see a gynaecologist in Beed, he suggested I should stop lifting heavy bundles but that was the only source of income for us. So I decided to get the hysterectomy done and get rid of this every month 'pain and stain'."

Other women described having nothing to use as sanitary products other than the clothes they use to carry the cane bundles. These are often left covered in pesticides and chemicals, with tiny cane particles stuck to them.

Ritu Bharadwaj, a principal researcher for IIED, said, "When we talk about the losses incurred and the damage done by climate change, we're not just talking about flooded apartments in New York, or scorched hillsides in Greece. These women's experiences are also a result of climate change, which has decimated their livelihoods and, some of what they have lost -- their dignity, good health, in some cases, their lives -- is difficult to quantify."

> Lata Waghmare, who migrates to Karnataka with her husband every year to work as cane cutters, said she delivered her second baby in a sugarcane field, scared of taking a leave post-delivery because of khada charges. "The penalty for skipping one day's work is between Rs 500 to Rs 1,000," she said.

The IIED said drought stood out as the most common reason for migration and more than half the women (55.73 per cent) from households that migrated had undergone a hysterectomy, compared to less than a fifth from households that stayed in Beed (17.06 per cent).

Some told IIED they were still in their twenties when they underwent the procedure.

Analysis of data between 1986 and 2022 shows there has been an average annual decrease in rainfall of about 2.31 mm per year in Beed, with droughts becoming more frequent and more severe.

Village records and the IIED survey data suggests a notable shift in migration patterns, with 55.67 per cent having started migrating in the last decade, up from 5.42 per cent three decades ago. This trend correlates with the increasing frequency and severity of drought conditions aggravated by climate change.

Bhardwaj said those in charge of the loss-and-damage fund -- agreed at last year's COP28 -- should work with Indian officials to create a social support structure for such women.

Delegates at the UN climate negotiations in Dubai in December agreed on a new loss-and-damage fund to deal with the impacts of climate change disproportionately affecting poor communities in the Global South.

The IIED paper makes a number of suggestions about how money from the fund could be used, while attempting to quantify the cost of health problems suffered by people like those migrating from Beed to work in the sugarcane fields.

The new loss-and-damage fund could be used to provide additional benefits through social protection programmes during times of climate crisis such as drought or flood. It could be used to incorporate climate risk assessments and planning into social protection programmes, the paper said.

—PTI

Muhammad Ishaq Dar takes charge as Pak's FM

ISLAMABAD, 12 MARCH

Veteran politician-cum-economist Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday assumed charge as Pakistan's new foreign minister as the cash-strapped country attempts to tackle myriad problems on the domestic and external fronts, including its relations with India and other neighbours. Dar was the CEO with JP Morgan's Global Corporate Bank in Singapore. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday inducted 19 members into his Cabinet, ending the tenuous wait for the completion of government formation after the 8 February elections resulted in a hung Parliament and days of political uncertainty. Dar is an ethnic Kashmiri and chartered accountant by training, and is a senior leader of the ruling Pakistan Muslin League-Nawaz. He is also a confidant of the party head and former three-time premier Nawaz Sharif. *—PTI*

Russia detains S Korean man on spying charges

MOSCOW, 12 MARCH

A South Korean man has been detained in Russia on suspicion of espionage, local media has reported. South Korean officials have confirmed the arrest and say its diplomats have engaged in talks for his return. Baek Won-soon was arrested in the far-eastern city of Vladivostok "at the start of the year", state agency Tass reported, and is now in a Moscow jail. He is believed to be the first South Korean detained in decades in Russia on spying charges. Little is known about his case, with South Korea's foreign ministry saying "the details" were under investigation and "it is difficult to comment". Its representatives were attempting provide consular support. But Russian state media Tass quoted an unnamed official in their report saying Baek is alleged to have passed on information "constituting state secrets to foreign intelligence services." *—BBC News*

2 dead, 38 rescued from migrant boat near Spain islands

BARCELONA, 12 MARCH

Spanish maritime rescuers said they pulled 38 people alive and recovered the remains of two others from a migrant boat that had set off from West Africa and was trying to reach the Canary Islands. The boat was spotted by a merchant vessel 140 kilometers or 87 miles south of Gran Canaria Monday evening. Four people in critical condition were evacuated to a hospital in two helicopters while 34 others were taken to the port of Arguineguín by boat, Spain's Maritime Rescue Service said. Among the survivors were seven women. Spanish authorities have been grappling with a surge in migrants and refugees from West Africa reaching the archipelago, a stepping stone to continental Europe. Nearly 12,000 people fleeing poverty, conflict and instability in West Africa arrived in the Canaries in the first two months of the year, according to Spain's Interior Ministry. *—AP*

PHOTO: ANI

3-storey building collapses in central Pakistan, killing 9

MULTAN, 12 MARCH

A three-story residential building collapsed in central Pakistan early Tuesday, leaving nine people dead, authorities said. Rubble from the collapsed building also fell on nearby homes, wounding several people in Multan, a city in the eastern Punjab province, senior government official Rizwan Qadeer said. He said the dead included four members from a family. Building collapses are common in Pakistan, where many are poorly constructed with cheap building materials and safety guidelines are ignored to cut costs. In June 2020, 22 people died when an apartment building collapsed in Karachi, the country's largest city. *—AP*

Israeli strikes kill 67 in Gaza as Ramadan begins

At least 31,112 Palestinians have been killed so far

RAFAH, 12 MARCH

With no end to the war sight, Palestinians in Gaza began fasting Monday for the holy month of Ramadan as hunger worsens across the strip and pressure is raised on Israel over the growing humanitarian crisis.

The United States, Qatar and Egypt had hoped to broker a cease-fire ahead of the normally joyous month of dawn-to-dusk fasting that would include the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, and the entry of much more humanitarian aid. But the cease-fire talks stalled last week.

Gaza's Health Ministry said the bodies of 67 people killed by Israeli strikes were brought to hospitals over the past 24 hours, bringing the Palestinian death toll to more than 31,112 since the war began. The ministry doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants in its count, but says that women and children make up two-thirds of the dead.

Palestinian women sit near the remains of a house destroyed in an Israeli air strike in the southern Gaza Strip on Wednesday *PHOTO: ANI*

Abuse of hostages doesn't legitimise further hostilities: UN

A UN envoy warned Israel that her finding of "clear and convincing information" that some hostages taken by Hamas during its 7 October attack were subjected to sexual violence "does not in any way legitimise further hostilities."

"In fact, it creates a moral imperative for a humanitarian cease-fire to end the unspeakable suffering imposed on Palestinian civilians in Gaza and bring about the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages," Pramila Patten told the UN Security Council on Monday where Israel's foreign minister sat listening.

"Continuation of hostilities can, in no way, protect them," she said of the hostages. "It can only expose them to further risk of violence, including sexual violence."

Israel airstrikes hit deep inside Lebanon, wounding 6: Hezbollah

Israeli airstrikes late Monday near Lebanon's Northeastern city of Baalbek wounded at least six people, a Hezbollah official said.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, said the locations of the airstrikes, the deepest in Lebanon since 26 February, have not yet been specified. In late February, Israeli airstrikes near the historic city of Baalbek killed two Hezbollah members. *—AP*

Aid ship sets sail from Cyprus to Gaza, where hunger is worsening

JERUSALEM, 12 MAR

An aid ship loaded with some 200 tons of food set sail Tuesday from Cyprus to Gaza, the international charity behind the effort said.

The shipment is a test for the opening of a sea corridor to supply aid to the territory, where starvation is spreading five months into the Israel-Hamas war. World Food Kitchen, the charity founded by celebrity chef José Andrés, posted on the X. that a ship set sail. Associated Press live footage showed it being towed out of a harbor in the port city of Larnaca. *—AP*

Houthis target a Liberian-flagged ship in Red Sea

DUBAI, 12 MARCH

Yemen's Houthi rebels targeted a Liberian-flagged container ship in the Red Sea with missiles on Monday, producing an explosion near the vessel but causing no damage, authorities said.

The master of the vessel reported the explosion and said no one was hurt, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre said. The UKMTO later identified the vessel as the Pinocchio, managed by a Singaporean firm.

The Houthis used two anti-ship ballistic missiles in the attack, the US military's Central Command said.

Houthi military spokesman Brig Gen Yahya Saree claimed the attack early Tuesday in a prerecorded statement, claiming the Pinocchio was an American ship without offering evidence to support the assertion. He said the Houthis would continue their attacks, aimed at pressuring an end to the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

Monday's attack comes after a Houthi missile struck a commercial ship in the Gulf of Aden last week, killing three of its crew members and forcing survivors to abandon the vessel.

It was the first fatal strike in a campaign of assaults by the Iranian-backed group over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The Houthis say the attacks are intended to pressure Israel into stopping the war, but their targets increasingly have little or nothing to do with the conflict. *—AP*

POLITICAL TURMOIL

Haiti's Prime Minister Ariel Henry has agreed to resign following weeks of mounting pressure *PHOTO: BBC*

Haiti PM resigns after transitional council is set up

PORT-AU-PRINCE, 12 MARCH

Haiti's Prime Minister Ariel Henry has agreed to resign following weeks of mounting pressure and increasing violence in the impoverished country.

It comes after regional leaders met in Jamaica on Monday to discuss a political transition in Haiti. Henry is currently stranded in Puerto Rico after being prevented by armed gangs from returning home. In a video address announcing his resignation, Henry urged Haitians to remain calm. "The government that I am leading will resign immediately after the installation of [a transition] council," Henry said. "I want to thank the Haitian people for the opportunity I had been granted. I'm asking all Haitians to remain calm and do everything they can for peace and stability to come back as fast as possible."

Henry, who had led the country supposedly on an interim basis since July 2021 following former President Jovenel Moïse's assassination, had repeatedly postponed elections, saying security must be restored first. Many Haitians had questioned him governing the country for this long without an elected president.

Heavily armed gangs have tightened their grip on the streets of the capital Port-au-Prince, and attacked the main prison to help thousands of inmates escape. They also demanded the resignation of the unelected prime minister.

The capital Port-au-Prince and the surrounding region is under a month-long state of emergency, while a curfew has been extended. Matthias Pierre, a former elections minister in Haiti, broke the news of Mr Henry's resignation to BBC's Newsday programme before it was confirmed publicly. He described the current situation in the country as "very precarious". *—BBC News*

Half of Pak senate members retire

ISLAMABAD, 12 MARCH

- The Senate experiences a turnover of its members every three years, as the six-year term of a senator comes to an end

The Pakistan Senate found itself in a state of dysfunction as more than half of its members retired on Monday night, leaving the upper house of parliament in a challenging situation for the next three weeks, Dawn reported.

Typically, the Senate experiences a turnover of its members every three years, as the six-year term of a senator comes to an end. Elections are then held promptly to fill the resulting vacancies. However, in an unprecedented turn of events, the delay in conducting general elections has led to this unique situation.

The failure of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to organise timely general elections has left the Senate in disarray, as reported by Dawn. ECP has announced that polling to fill 48 vacancies will take place on 2 April, with the election schedule set to be issued shortly. Notably, four seats previously reserved for the erstwhile tribal areas will not be part of the elections, as they have been abolished following their merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the 25th Amendment. *—ANI*

US call for addressing Green Card backlog, H-1B issues

WASHINGTON, 12 MARCH

Eminent lawmakers from both the Democratic and Republican parties at an immigration summit have called for urgently addressing the Green Card backlog, an issue that is majorly impacting Indian professionals and the issues related to the H-1B visa.

At the first-of-its-kind 'Tech Immigration Summit' at the US Capitol on Monday hosted by the Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora (FIIDS), the lawmakers pushed for removing the seven per cent country quota when it comes to issuing Green Card or legal permanent residency to foreign guest workers in specialised categories.

PHOTO: PTI

In the absence of such a move, the Green Card waiting period for Indian immigrants would be more than 20 years and over 70 years in many cases. A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants to the US as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently.

Congressman Ro Khanna, who is also co-chair of the Congressional India Caucus, called for a rational immigration policy.

- Khanna is co-sponsor and lead of the Eagle Act, which he said would get rid of the country caps so that people aren't perpetually in status because that hurts American workers

Khanna is co-sponsor and lead of the Eagle Act, which he said would get rid of the country caps so that people aren't perpetually in status because that hurts American workers.

"You are hurting American workers by allowing corporations to underpay folks on an H1-B, and you're hurting the families on H1-B. And that's why we need to move them to green cards and ultimately citizenship," he said. *—PTI*

TO COUNTER CHINA

US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo addresses the reception, at India House, in Washington on Tuesday *PHOTO: ANI*

US assessing growth of chip controls

MANILA, 11 MARCH

The United States is constantly assessing the need to expand export controls to stop China from acquiring advanced computer chips and manufacturing equipment that could be used to boost its military, US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said Monday.

The US export controls were first launched in 2022 to counter the use of chips for military applications that include the development of hypersonic missiles and artificial intelligence.

Last year, the US Commerce Department broadened the export controls, sparking protests from China's Commerce Ministry that the restrictions violated international trade rules and "seriously threaten the stability of industrial supply chains."

China said it would take "all necessary measures" to safeguard its rights and interests and urged Washington to lift the export control as soon as possible.

Asked if the US was planning to further broaden the chip export controls to China, Raimondo said in a news conference in the Philippine capital Manila that it was constantly under consideration.

"We look at this every single day," Raimondo said. "Technology is changing faster than ever, which means we have to wake up every day and ask ourselves, ₹are we doing enough?'"

"My job is to protect the American people and to make sure there are no sophisticated technology, including semiconductor technology, artificial intelligence technology that we have, that China doesn't have, that they can't access it and use it to enable the Chinese military," she said. *—AP*

Biden, Trump may clinch nominations in poll contests

NEW YORK, 12 MARCH

Joe Biden and Donald Trump hope to clinch their parties' presidential nominations with dominant victories in a slate of state primaries on Tuesday as the 2024 fight for the White House moves into a new phase.

Joe Biden *PHOTO: X*

Donald Trump *PHOTO: X*

Neither Biden, a Democrat, nor Trump, a Republican, faces significant Opposition in primary contests across Georgia, Washington, Mississippi and Hawaii. The only question is whether they will earn the necessary delegates in each state to hit the 50 per cent national threshold to become their parties' presumptive nominees.

Whether it happens Tuesday night or in the coming days, the 2024 presidential contest is on the verge of a crystallizing moment that will solidify a general election rematch between Biden and Trump. And that rematch — the first featuring two US Presidents since 1956 — will almost certainly deepen the nation's searing political and cultural divides in the eight-month grind that lies ahead.

On the eve of Tuesday's primaries, Trump acknowledged that Biden would be the Democratic nominee, even as he unleashed a new attack on the president's age. "I assume he's going to be the candidate," Trump said of Biden on CNBC. "I'm his only opponent other than life, life itself."

- Neither Biden, nor Trump faces significant Opposition in primary contests across Georgia, Washington, Mississippi and Hawaii. The question is whether they will earn the necessary delegates in each state to hit the 50 per cent national threshold

Biden, too, directed much of his attention toward Trump, whom the Democratic president described as a serious threat to democracy during a campaign stop Monday night in New Hampshire. He also signaled a more robust presence on the campaign trail.

Georgia leads the slate of four states holding primary contests on Tuesday. The state was a pivotal battleground in the last presidential election — so close that Trump finds himself indicted there for his push to "find 11,780 votes" and overturn Biden's victory.

But as both candidates seek to project strength in the key swing state, Biden and Trump are grappling with glaring flaws. *—AP*

Andrew Tate detained in Romania

BUCHAREST, 12 MARCH

Online influencer Andrew Tate was detained in Romania and handed an arrest warrant issued by British authorities, his spokesperson said Tuesday.

Tate, 37, and his brother Tristan Tate were detained Monday evening on allegations of sexual aggression in a UK case dating back to 2012-2015, spokesperson Mateea Petrescu said.

She said the Bucharest Court of Appeal is set to make a "pivotal decision" Tuesday on whether to execute the warrants issued by UK's Westminster Magistrates Court.

Andrew Tate *PHOTO: X*

Four women had reported Tate to the UK authorities for alleged sexual violence. *—AP*

PROBE ON

Boeing whistle-blower found dead in US

WASHINGTON, 12 MARCH

A former Boeing employee known for raising concerns about the firm's production standards has been found dead in the US.

John Barnett had worked for Boeing for 32 years, until his retirement in 2017. In the days before his death, he had been giving evidence in a whistleblower lawsuit against the company. Boeing said it was saddened to hear of Barnett's passing. The Charleston County coroner confirmed his death to BBC on Monday.

It said he had died from a "self-inflicted" wound on 9 March and police were investigating. Barnett had worked for the US plane giant for 32 years, until his retirement in 2017 on health grounds. From 2010, he worked as a quality manager at the North Charleston plant making the 787 Dreamliner, a state-of-the-art airliner used mainly on long-haul routes.

In 2019, Barnett told BBC that under-pressure workers had been deliberately fitting sub-standard parts to aircraft on the production line. He also said he had uncovered serious problems with oxygen systems, which could mean one in four breathing masks would not work in an emergency.

John Barnett *PHOTO: X*

- From 2010, he worked as a quality manager at the North Charleston plant making the 787 Dreamliner, a state-of-the-art airliner used mainly on long-haul routes

He said soon after starting work in South Carolina he had become concerned that the push to get new aircraft built meant the assembly process was rushed and safety was compromised, something the company denied.

He later told BBC that workers had failed to follow procedures intended to track components through the factory, allowing defective components to go missing. He said in some cases, sub-standard parts had even been removed from scrap bins and fitted to planes that were being built to prevent delays on the production line. He also claimed that tests on emergency oxygen systems due to be fitted to the 787 showed a failure rate of 25 per cent meaning that one in four could fail to deploy in a real-life emergency. *—BBC News*

Google, ECI tie up to prevent spread of false info during polls

Google says it will help audiences identify AI-generated content

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Google India in a blog post on Tuesday said its product features are designed to elevate authoritative information

PHOTO: X

- Alphabet Inc-owned Google has joined hands with Election Commission of India (ECI) to prevent spread of false information, promote authorised content and label AI-generated data during the upcoming general elections.

Alphabet Inc-owned Google has joined hands with Election Commission of India (ECI) to prevent spread of false information, promote authorised content and label AI-generated data during the upcoming general elections.

Google India in a blog post on Tuesday said its product features are designed to elevate authoritative information on various election-related topics.

"We are collaborating with ECI to enable people to easily discover critical voting information on Google Search - such as how to register and how to vote - in both English and Hindi," Google said.

With more people using artificial intelligence to create content, Google said it is setting up processes to help audiences identify AI-generated content.

"As more advertisers leverage the power and opportunity of AI, we want to make sure we continue to provide people with greater transparency and the information they need to make informed decisions. Our ads policies already prohibit the use of manipulated media to mislead people, like deepfakes or doctored content," it said.

Google has already started displaying labels for content created with YouTube generative AI features, like Dream Screen.

"Soon, YouTube will begin to require creators to disclose when they've created realistic altered or synthetic content, and will display a label that indicates for people when they're watching this content," it said.

The blog post further said the company has begun to roll out restrictions on the types of election-related queries for which Gemini will return responses.

It said that for news and information related to the election, YouTube's recommendation system prominently surfaces content from authoritative sources on the YouTube homepage, in search results, and highlights high-quality content from authoritative news sources.

The popular search engine said they have set policies around demonstrably false claims in areas like manipulated content, incitement to violence, hate speech, and harassment, that could undermine democratic processes.

Google has set strict policies and restrictions around who can run election-related advertising on its platforms. These include identity verification, certification and authorisation by the ECI, and financier disclosures.

Google said it has recently joined the Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity (C2PA), and pledged to help prevent deceptive AI-generated imagery, audio or video content from interfering with this year's global elections.

Earlier, Google had introduced the Google News Initiative Training Network and the Fact Check Explorer tool to enable newsrooms and journalists deliver reliable, fact-checked updates to debunk misinformation.

Additionally, Google is supporting Shakti, India Election Fact-Checking Collective, which is a consortium of news publishers and fact-checkers in India working together to aid the early detection of online misinformation, including deepfakes, and to create a common repository that news publishers can use to tackle the challenges of misinformation at scale.

—PTI

Rupee falls 3 paise to close at 82.78 against US dollar

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day 3 paise lower at 82.78 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, as market participants remained on the sidelines ahead of the release of key macroeconomic data. Forex traders said the Indian rupee declined marginally on positive US dollar and recovery in crude oil prices. However, positive domestic markets and sustained foreign fund inflows over the past three sessions supported the local unit at lower levels. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.74 and touched the intra-day low of 82.78 and a high of 82.72 against the greenback. The local unit finally settled at 82.78 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a loss of 2 paise from its previous close. On Monday, the rupee declined by 8 paise to settle at 82.75 against the US dollar.

—PTI

Gold slips Rs 50; silver jumps Rs 400

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Gold price slipped by Rs 50 to Rs 66,350 per 10g in the national capital on Tuesday amid weak global cues, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal had settled at Rs 66,400 per 10g in the previous trade. Silver jumped Rs 400 to settle at Rs 75,900 per kg. "Spot gold price (24 carats) in the Delhi markets is trading at Rs 66,350 per 10 gram, down by Rs 50 from the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the international markets, spot gold at COMEX was trading at USD 2,177 per ounce, down USD 3 from the previous close. Silver was trading marginally higher at USD 24.44 per ounce globally. The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day 3 paise lower at 82.78 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, as market participants remained on the sidelines ahead of the release of key macroeconomic data. The market experts said that the investors will also look at the UK job report and Germany's CPI data expected on Tuesday.*—PTI*

Bharat Highways makes bourses debut; lists with 1% premium

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Units of Bharat Highways InvIT made a muted debut on the bourses on Tuesday with a premium of just 1 per cent, against the issue price of Rs 100.The unit started the trade at Rs 101.10 on the NSE, up by 1.1 per cent over the issue price of Rs 100. In the intra-day trade it jumped 1.93 per cent to Rs 103.05 per unit on the exchange.On the BSE, the units of Bharat Highways InvIT got listed at Rs 101 per unit, a premium of 1 per cent to the issue price.In the mid-session trade, the company commanded a market capitalisation of Rs 4,564.93 crore on the NSE. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 187.43 points to 73,690.07, while NSE Nifty gained 1.85 points to 22,334.50.*—PTI*

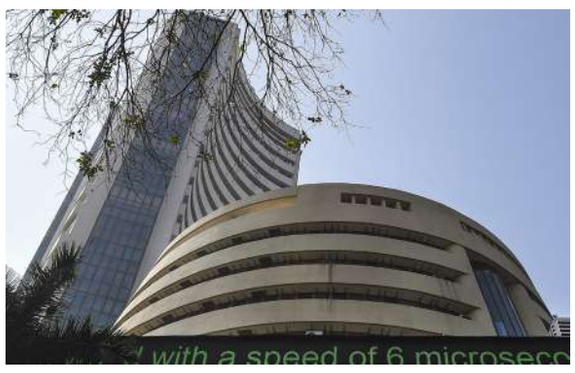
SpiceJet COO, CCO resign amid firm's cash-crunch issues

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

SpiceJet on Tuesday said several members of its commercial team have resigned with immediate effect, as part of a strategic restructuring at the airline. On Monday, sources said the airline's Chief Operating Officer ArunKashyap and Chief Commercial Officer Shilpa Bhatia have put in their papers."As part of SpiceJet's strategic restructuring, several members of the commercial team including the Chief Commercial Officer have left the company with immediate effect," an airline spokesperson said. It is speeding up the process of resolution of all past disputes. *—PTI*

Sensex edges higher, Nifty ends flat

MUMBAI, 12 MARCH



Among Sensex firms, HDFC Bank climbed more than 2 per cent

PHOTO: PTI

Equity market benchmark Sensex ended higher on Tuesday due to heavy buying in index heavyweights like HDFC Bank, TCS and Reliance Industries amid mixed cues from Asian markets.

Witnessing a volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed 165.32 points or 0.22 per cent higher at 73,667.96. During the day, the barometer surged 501.52 points to 74,004.16.

The broader Nifty, however, ended almost flat at 22,335.70, inching up 3.05 points or 0.01 per cent.

Among Sensex firms, HDFC Bank climbed more than 2 per cent. TCS, Maruti, Infosys, Reliance Industries and Bharti Airtel were among the major gainers.

State Bank of India, JSW Steel, ITC, Tata Motors, UltraTech Cement and Nestle were among the laggards.

"The domestic market witnessed range-bound trading today after the previous day's sharp profit booking. However, mid and small-cap stocks remained pressured, primarily due to apprehensions regarding inflated valuations," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

"Global sentiment remained mixed as investors awaited key US inflation data, which could offer insights into the Fed's interest rate decisions. Additionally, market participants are anticipating India's inflation figures scheduled for release today, to remain consistent with the previous month, which will be at the middle of RBI's tolerance range," he added.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge declined 2.11 per cent and midcap index dipped 1.31 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, realty plummeted by 3.53 per cent, industrials by 1.74 per cent, commodities by 1.73 per cent, services by 1.70 per cent, utilities by 1.59 per cent and metal by 1.34 per cent. IT and Teck were the only gainers.

"Despite certain indices and sectors initially performing well, many retreated from their day's highs, while others hovered close to their lows. Throughout the day, both the midcap and small-cap indices remained under pressure, reflecting the prevailing challenges across these segments of the market.

"On the sectoral front, apart from IT, all other indices were trading in the red, with the realty index down nearly 4 per cent.

—PTI

FLY91 to start Lakshadweep flights from April

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Regional airline FLY91 will start commercial services on 18 March and flights to Lakshadweep in April.

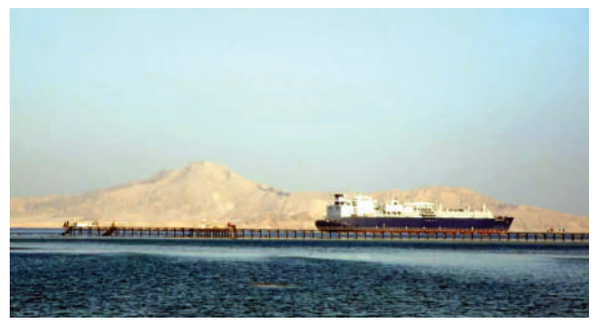
The Goa-based carrier, which will have a fleet of 70-seater ATR 72-600 aircraft, has raised USD 25 million, and plans to connect 50 cities in 5 years, its MD and CEO Manoj Chacko said on Tuesday.

At a briefing at the Mopa airport, Chacko said it will start commercial services from March 18 with flights from Goa to Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

There will also be flights to Sindhudurg from Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

The carrier will start flights to Agatti in Lakshadweep from April.

FLY91 will have a total of six ATR 72-600 planes in six months. *—PTI*



Countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe will face the most disruption across industries

PHOTO: X

GTRI: Red Sea crisis will hit trade this year

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

The Red Sea crisis will adversely impact trade volumes in substantial ways in 2024, according to the report of economic think tank GTRI.

The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that rising shipping, and insurance costs and delayed arrival of shipments will continue to disrupt global value chains, squeeze margins, and make exports of many low-margin products unviable from current locations.

Countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe will face the most disruption across industries, it added.

It said that the disruption is impacting Indian trade, especially with the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. India, heavily reliant on the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait for crude oil and LNG imports and trade with key regions, faces substantial economic and security risks from any disruption in this area.

About 65 per cent of India's crude oil imports in FY2023, valued at USD 105 billion, from countries like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and others, likely passed through the Suez Canal.

For overall merchandise trade with Europe and North Africa, about 50 per cent of imports and 60 per cent of exports, totalling $113 billion, might have used this route, it said.

This conflict is leading to increased shipping costs (40-60 per cent) and delays due to rerouting (upto 20 days more), higher insurance premiums (15-20 per cent).

In March 2024, the crisis was in its fifth month.

It suggested the government to diversify its sources of crude oil and LNG, explore alternative trade routes to reduce dependency on the conflict-prone Red Sea passage; and rely on ports outside conflict zones, like Oman and Djibouti, for transshipment and regional trade.

It also asked for offering financial support and insurance schemes to Indian companies affected by trade disruptions.

It added that the crisis underscores how geopolitical conflicts can swiftly destabilise global shipping routes, leading to increased shipping costs and significant delays across multiple sectors and regions.

—PTI

Officials hold flags during the inauguration of automobile in-plant railway siding built at Hansalpur

PHOTO: PTI

Maruti Suzuki opens India's 1st in-plant railway siding project

AHMEDABAD, 12 MARCH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday inaugurated India's first automobile in-plant railway siding project of Maruti Suzuki (MSIL) at its plant at Hansalpur in Gujarat's Mehsana district virtually from a function here.

The project has been developed under the Centre's PM Gati Shakti mission in partnership with the Gujarat government, Indian Railways and MSIL at a cost of Rs 976 crore, MSIL's Executive Officer, Corporate Affairs, Rahul Bharti said.

The project has been developed by a special purpose vehicle - Bahucharaji Rail Corporation Limited (BRCL) - set up with Gujarat Railway Infrastructure Development Corporation (GRIDE), Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) and MSIL as partners with 49 per cent, 29 per cent and 26 per cent equities each respectively.

GRIDE is a joint venture between the Gujarat government and the Ministry of Railways.

The railway line within the Bahucharaji plant is developed entirely by Maruti Suzuki at a cost of Rs 105 crore, Bharti said.

The project eliminates an annual 50,000 truck trips for MSIL, with the automobile major planning to increase dispatches of finished cars by railway from 26 per cent currently to 40 per cent annually at its full capacity, he said.

—PTI

DESPITE UNCERTAINTIES

India's exports will close fiscal at same level as 2023: Goyal

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Piyush Goyal ***PHOTO: PTI***

Commerce and Industry minister Piyush Goyal has exuded confidence that during this fiscal, the country's goods and services export numbers will be at the same level; as it was last year. This is despite slowdown and uncertainties in the global trade.

He also said that the government measures such production-linked incentives schemes and focus on high-quality goods and services would help in containing the country's trade deficit.

Cumulatively, the country's merchandise exports in April-January 2023-24 contracted by 4.89 per cent to USD 353.92 billion. The estimated value of services exports during the ten-month period stood at USD 84.45 billion. The war between Russia and Ukraine; Israel-Hamas is impacting global supply chains and the Red Sea crisis has led to significant increase in transportation costs and delay as Indian exporters have to send their consignments through the Cape of Good Hope, encircling Africa.

The minister said that India saw a scorching pace of growth in its international trade in the years between 2021 and 2023.

"We grew by 55 per cent over a period of two years, both in goods and in services'. It went up to USD 776 billion in only two years. And with growth on both goods and services, we could clearly see that this year is going to be one where we will have to consolidate the gains," he said.

—PTI

GE Aerospace, Air India ally for flight op software

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Aircraft engine supplier and services provider GE Aerospace has collaborated with Air India on the signing of a flight operations software contract. According to a press release, this strategic partnership marks Air India as the first enterprise in India to adopt GE's 'FlightPulse' pilot app along with Safety and Fuel Insight for its entire group.

Through the implementation of Safety Insight, Air India will gain access to advanced analytics and real-time data monitoring to bolster safety measures and ensure peak performance across its fleet, the release added.

Additionally, Fuel Insight will equip the enterprise with comprehensive fuel efficiency solutions, empowering the group to optimize journeys for enhanced fuel management.

The FlightPulse pilot app, complemented by its embedded Animation Module, will engage over 5,000 of Air India's flight crew by delivering personalized insights from flight data.

"This initiative aims to facilitate informed operational decisions and active participation in driving Air India's flight safety, training, and sustainability endeavours," it added.

Under the Tata Group and Singapore Airlines, Air India is positioned to drive significant changes in its operational landscape.

—PTI

Firms report strongest hiring outlook for June

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Employers in India continue to report bullish hiring outlook for the upcoming June quarter, with 36 per cent of companies planning to add more staff in the next three months, a survey said on Tuesday.

According to the latest ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey of nearly 3,150 employers, India reports the strongest outlook among 42 countries across the globe.

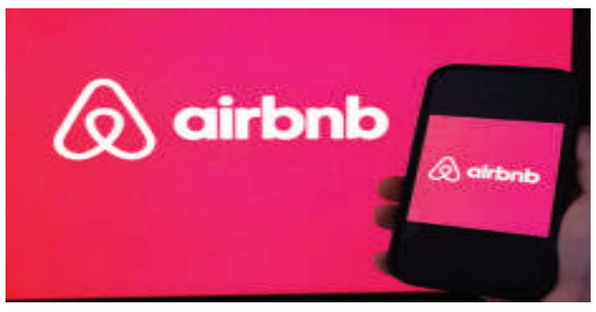
For the April-June period, 50 per cent of employers are forecasting an increase in payrolls, 14 per cent anticipating a decrease and 33 per cent expecting no change, while 3 per cent are unsure, the resulting net employment outlook is 38 per cent.

India's net employment outlook has strengthened by 6 per cent since April-June 2023 and is down 1 per cent when compared to the same period ?last quarter. The Net Employment Outlook is derived from the percentage of employers anticipating an increase in hiring activity and subtracting from it the percentage of employers expecting a decrease. At 36 per cent, India reported the highest net employment outlook, followed by the US at 34 per cent, and China at 32 per cent. The global average stood at 22 per cent, while the weakest employment outlook was reported in Romania (- 2 per cent). *—PTI*

FOR CUSTOMERS' PRIVACY

Airbnb bans surveillance cameras inside rentals

SAN FRANCISCO, 12 MARCH



The online rental platform made the move after customers voiced concerns about surveillance

PHOTO: X

- Airbnb says it is introducing a worldwide ban on the use of security cameras inside rental properties.The changes to the company's policy will come into effect at the end of next month. The online rental platform says the move aims to simplify its rules on security cameras and prioritise the privacy of guests.

Airbnb says it is introducing a worldwide ban on the use of security cameras inside rental properties.

The changes to the company's policy will come into effect at the end of next month.

The online rental platform says the move aims to simplify its rules on security cameras and prioritise the privacy of guests.

Airbnb users have previously voiced concerns about the use of indoor surveillance cameras.

"These changes were made in consultation with our guests, hosts and privacy experts, and we'll continue to seek feedback to help ensure our policies work for our global community," Airbnb's Head of Community Policy and Partnerships, Juniper Downs said in a statement.

"As the majority of listings on Airbnb do not report having a security camera, this update is expected to impact a smaller subset of listings on the platform," she added.

Airbnb's current rules allow the use of security cameras in common areas such as living rooms and hallways, as long as the location of the equipment is made clear on the property's listing.

The updated policy also bans the use of outdoor cameras that point inside properties. Airbnb does not allow surveillance cameras to be placed in private areas like bedrooms and bathrooms.

The new rules will still allow the use of doorbell cameras and noise monitors in common areas. These devices also have to be disclosed on the property's listing page.

Airbnb said it seeks to balance the need for hosts to be able to monitor the security of their property and be aware of issues such as unauthorised parties while prioritising the privacy of guests.

The announcement comes just over a week after US comedy show Saturday Night Live aired a spoof Airbnb advert which included a joke about a camera being hidden in a toilet.

—BBC News

TATA IPL

KNOW THE TEAMS

PUNJAB SUPER KINGS

Powerhitting is Punjab's newfound batting template. With the addition of Livingstone and Rajapaksa the franchise has many options to put opposition under trouble

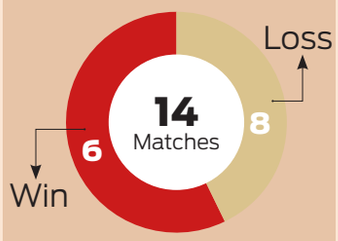
Shikar Dhawan
Key Batsman

41.44	99	11
Avg (Average)	HS (Highest Score)	Innings (Innings)
142.91	49	12
SR (Strike Rate)	4s (Fours)	6s (Sixes)

STRENGTHS

This is one of the most experienced batting line up with Dhawan, Bairstow, Rossouw. Fans expect reliable pace attack from Rabada, Arshdeep and Sam Curran

2023 IPL RECORDS

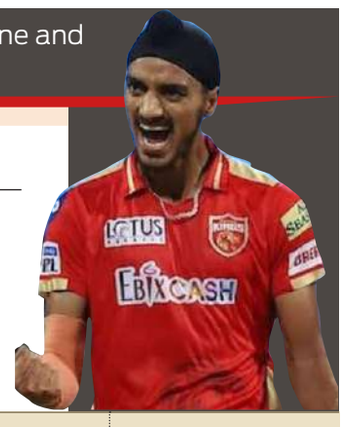


WEAKNESS

Out-of-form players Bairstow, Livingstone, Woakes are problematic for the team. Lack of experienced spinners

Arshdeep Singh
Key Bowler

14	17	9.70
Innings (Innings)	Wkts (Wickets)	Eco (Economy)
29/4	1	
BBI – Best Bowling in innings (Runs/ Wickets)	4W (Wickets)	



SQUAD

Shikar Dhawan (Captain), Jitesh Sharma, Jonny Bairstow, Prabhsimran Singh, Liam Livingstone, Harpreet Bhatia, Rilee Rossouw, Shashank Singh, Chris Woakes, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, Ashutosh Sharma, Tanay Thyagarajann, Atharva Taide, Rishi Dhawan, Sam Curran, Sikandar Raza, Shivam Singh, Prince Choudhary, Harpreet Brar, Arshdeep Singh, Kagiso Rabada, Nathan Ellis, Rahul Chahar, Vidwath Kaverappa, Harshal Patel

SCHEDULE

23 March vs DC	25 March vs RCB	31 March vs LSG	5 April vs GT
Punjab	Bengaluru	Lucknow	Ahmedabad

Pant declared fit as keeper-batter for IPL

Pant to be back as DC skipper after extensive rehabilitation

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

The BCCI on Tuesday declared Rishabh Pant fit to play as a wicketkeeper-batter in the upcoming IPL, brightening his prospects of a national comeback in the T20 World Cup after suffering multiple injuries in a harrowing car crash 14 months ago.

Pant, who will once again be back as Delhi Capitals skipper, has undergone extensive rehabilitation and is ready to shoulder the dual responsibility in the event starting March 22, ending weeks of speculation surrounding his exact role in the league.

A few weeks back, Pant, in an interaction with Star Sports, had recalled telling his doctor that he would shave off at least six months from his recovery timeline. "I asked the doctor how long will it take for me to recover. I told him that everybody is speaking different things, but you will give me the most clarity about it. He (Doctor) said it would take 16 to 18 months. I told the doctor from whatever timeline you give me, I will reduce six months from it," Pant had told the official TV broadcasters of IPL.

The BCCI on Tuesday declared Rishabh Pant fit to play as a wicketkeeper-batter in the upcoming IPL **PHOTO: PTI**

The National Cricket Academy had declared him fit a week back after he passed all the fitness tests related to his 'Return To Play' (RTP). It has been learnt that he batted for long hours and more importantly, kept wickets for extensive periods in match simulations organised by the NCA.There was speculation that he might play only as an 'Impact Player' or batter but one of India's biggest match-winners in the past six years has managed to get back in shape to go full throttle. Pant keeping wickets also means that he would have a fair chance of playing in the T20 World Cup if he can come up with some impactful innings during the IPL season. "If he can make the T20 World Cup for us, that will be a big thing for us. He is a big asset for us. If he can keep, he can play in the World Cup. Let's see how he does in the IPL," BCCI secretary Jay Shah recently told PTI in an exclusive interaction. Pant was present at the Capitals table during the IPL auction last year, and has been working on his fitness at the NCA after recovering from the injuries sustained in the unfortunate incident.

The BCCI also confirmed the PTI news report from last month that Mohammed Shami (Gujarat Titans) will not take part in the IPL due to heel surgery. Shami is not expected back before September this year. "The fast bowler successfully underwent surgery on February 26th, 2024, for his right heel problem. He is currently being monitored by the BCCI medical team and is ruled out of the upcoming IPL 2024," the BCCI statement read. Lanky fast bowler Prasidh Krishna (Rajasthan Royals), who had an unsuccessful Test debut in South Africa is also being monitored by the BCCI medical team. PTI had reported in January that Prasidh will be out for an extensive period. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Kohli's gives his team the required intensity: Kumble

BENGALURU, 12 MARCH

Former Indian captain Anil Kumble marvels at Virat Kohli's manic consistency and believes that his on-field aggression always adds to the required intensity in any T20 team that he plays for.Kumble marked it as the biggest legacy of Kohli, who is the only player in the history of IPL to play 16 seasons for only one franchise -- Royal Challengers Bangalore."I would say consistency. I saw him in RCB when I was a part of RCB, that's where he started his T20 career, after being a U-19 World Cup winner. From there, the transformation in his fitness, the way he wanted to play his cricket, and the performances he put in white-ball cricket," Kumbke told Star Sports."In Test cricket, we know his greatness. In T20s for India, his consistency over some time has been immense.—*PTI*

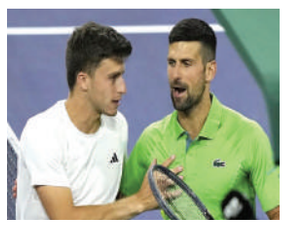


PHOTO: AFP

Luca Nardi stuns Djokovic with a 6-4, 3-6, 6-3

INDIAN WELLS, 12 MARCH

Luca Nardi used a combination of poise and power to stun his boyhood idol and top-seeded Novak Djokovic with a 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 win on Monday night in the third round of the BNP Paribas Open.Nardi, who's ranked No. 123, closed out his huge upset over the No. 1 player in the rankings with an ace. The 20-year-old from Italy dropped his racket and brought his hands to his face almost in disbelief before greeting Djokovic at the net."This is a miracle," Nardi said in an interview after the match on the Tennis Channel. "I'm a 20-year-old guy, 100 in the world, and beating Novak. So, crazy. Crazy."Setting the tone early with his hard-hitting shots, Nardi frustrated Djokovic all evening. There was a moment when Nardi was surprised by an "in" call and casually hit the ball back over the net. —*AP*

Bakshi blazes for 64, takes lead in 6th leg of WPGT

GURUGRAM, 12 MARCH

Hitaashee Bakshi played a sensational front nine at the DLF Golf and Country Club as she carded 8-under 64 on the first day of the sixth Leg of the 2024 Women's Pro Golf Tour here on Tuesday. Hitaashee, who has had a steady season so far and leads the Order of Merit, opened sedately with two pars and then landed two eagles and four other birdies in the next seven holes for a front nine of 8-under 28. She had another birdie on the 13th and a bogey on the 17th, her only blemish of the day, to finish at 64, equalling the ladies course record. Hitaashee, who in her five previous starts has won once and been second.—*PTI*

FIH rankings: Indian men slip to 4th position

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

India on Tuesday slipped a spot to the fourth position in the latest FIH men's world rankings with Germany taking the third place following their impressive run at the FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers.

India (2761) had directly qualified for the Paris Olympics through an Asian Games gold last year and didn't need to play in the recently concluded Olympic Qualifiers.

Germany (2786), on the other hand, went unbeaten at the Olympic Qualifiers in Oman and followed that up with two wins and two draws against Argentina and a young Belgian side during the Santiago del Estero mini tournament in the FIH Pro League to surpass India.

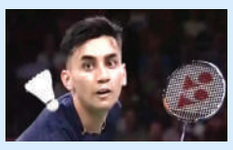
Netherlands (3060) continue to sit at the top of the rankings, coming away from the India leg of the FIH Pro League, relatively unscathed, with two draws against India and a loss to Australia accounting for their only dropped points in 8 matches.

Belgium (2848) continues to hold on to the second place in the rankings after a strong showing at the Olympic Qualifiers in Valencia, Spain.

Australia (2757), who were the stand-out performers during the FIH Pro League mini-tournament in India, leapfrogged England (2720) into fifth place. —*PTI*

LAKSHYA'S PARIS HOPES BRIGHTEN, ENTERS NO.15

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH



Commonwealth Games champion Lakshya Sen's hopes of cutting Paris received a boost as he grabbed the 15th position in the latest Olympic Games Qualification rankings following his semifinal finish at last week's French Open badminton tournament. The 22-year-old from Almora reached a career-best ranking of world number six in November 2022 but saw his rankings plummet to world No. 25 in April last year. He recovered to the 11th spot by August but fell to 20 early this year following a series of early exits.Things were not looking good after his first-round losses in Malaysia Super 1000 and India Super 750 as he stayed world No. 19 in the Olympic Games qualification for a few weeks but a semifinal finish at the Super 750 event in the French capital last week saw him take his tally to 74,897 points. —*PTI*

Musheer, Iyer make merry as Mumbai set 528-run target

MUMBAI, 9 MARCH

Young Musheer Khan (136) continued his rapid ascent with a superlative 135 to put Mumbai in an impregnable position on day 3 of the Ranji Trophy final against Vidarbha, with Shreyas Iyer (95) and Ajinkya Rahane (73) also making significant contributions here on Tuesday.

At stumps, Ranji Trophy behemoths Mumbai had one hand on their 42nd title after setting a humongous 538-run target against a battered Vidarbha, who remained without their most successful bowler Aditya Sarwate throughout the third day. If the second day was all about Mumbai adopting a cautious approach to build their lead, day 3 witnessed their batters ramming home the advantage with a definite plan and execution as they put on 418 in their second innings. Vidarbha were 10 for no loss in their second innings with openers Dhruv Shorey (7) and Atharva Taide (3) unscathed, needing another 528 runs to win with two days left in the game. Despite having a strong grip on the game, Mumbai batters respected the fact that there is still plenty of time left in the contest and tables can turn quickly.

Musheer Khan became the youngest Mumbai batter to score a hundred in a Ranji Trophy final **PHOTO: PTI**

Hence, Mumbai's approach on day 3 remained fixated on batting for long hauls and in the process taking the game as far away from the opposition, who have been battered.Resuming at 58, Rahane began positively with a four but became a victim of left-arm Vidarbha spinner Harsh Dubey (5/144) for the second time in the contest. Vidarbha 105 and 10 for 0 (Shorey 7*, Taide 3*) need another 528 runs to beat Mumbai 224 and 418 (Musheer 136, Iyer 95, Rahane 73, Mulani 50*, Dubey 5-144, Yash 3-79)

—*PTI*

Indian pistol shooters win team gold

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

India added a second gold medal to its tally in the Para Shooting World Cup with the Mixed 10m Air Pistol Standard (SH1) team clinching the top podium finish on day four of the competition here on Tuesday.

The team of Rudransh Khandelwal (364), Akash (346), and Sandeep Kumar (340) aggregated 1050 to finish ahead of South Korea (1037), while China (1019) ended up third.

Rudransh Khandelwal **PHOTO: PTI**

In the individual section of the same category, Rudransh had to settle for the silver medal after being tied with Korea's Kim Jungnam, who both scored 364.

But the Korean won based on more 'inner 10s' (closest to bullseye). While Kim had nine 'inner 10s', Khandelwal had 2. However, the teenage shooter can take heart from the fact that he established the world junior record in the category. —*PTI*

Sabalenka, Gauff advance to fourth round

ITANAGAR, 5 MARCH

Aryna Sabalenka's powerful serve and groundstrokes proved too much for Emma Raducanu as the Australian Open champion reached the fourth round at Indian Wells with a 6-3, 7-5 victory.

Bronzetti made the third seed work but Gauff saved 10 of the 11 break points she faced to advance to the fourth round where she will battle Belgian Elise Mertens on her 20th birthday. Mertens defeated Japan's Naomi Osaka 7-5, 6-4.

The Belarusian, bedeviled by double faults in the past, issued one on her first match point but kept her composure.The world number two blasted a cross-court forehand winner on her fourth opportunity to seal the win under sunny skies in the California desert.

Sabalenka, who won her second straight Australian Open in January, will face either Ukrainian Elina Svitolina or American Emma Navarro in the Round of 16.

Coco Gauff did not play her best tennis but still managed to dispatch Italian Lucia Bronzetti 6-2, 7-6(5) in the American's last singles match as a teenager. Bronzetti made the third seed work but Gauff saved 10 of the 11 break points she faced to advance to the fourth round where she will battle Belgian Elise Mertens on her 20th birthday. Mertens defeated Japan's Naomi Osaka 7-5, 6-4. —*AP*

PREMIER LEAGUE

Chelsea outlast Newcastle 3-2 behind Cole Palmer's goal

LONDON, 12 MARCH

Chelsea ran its Premier League unbeaten streak to four with a 3-2 win over Newcastle United at Stamford Bridge on Monday.

Cole Palmer had a goal and an assist, while Myhailo Mudryk and Nicolas Jackson also scored pretty goals for the Blues in a win that moves them within a point of their 10th-place visitors.

Nicolas Jackson handed the Blues an early lead in SW6, with the striker's flick taking Cole Palmer's initial shot past Martin Dubravka in the Magpies' goal. It was Jackson's 12th goal of the season in all competitions – taking him level with the assister Palmer this campaign.

However, Newcastle started to grow more and more into it as the first half progressed and that was told in 43 minutes. After a lapse of concentration from the Blues, Alexander Isak was allowed to open up his body fire the ball into the bottom corner, and level the game.

Palmer was on hand to restore Chelsea's lead, though, before the hour-mark. A special strike from the Blues' No.20 in front of Gareth Southgate and Steve Holland, who were at Stamford Bridge for the match, gave the hosts the lead again.

Cole Palmer, left, celebrates after scoring his side's second goal during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Newcastle at Stamford Bridge stadium in London on Tuesday **PHOTO: AFP**

- Cole Palmer had a goal and an assist, while Myhailo Mudryk and Nicolas Jackson also scored pretty goals for the Blues in a win that moves them within a point of their 10th-place visitors.

Next up for the Blues was a fantastic solo goal from Mykhailo Mudryk. Minutes after entering the pitch as a substitute, Mudryk took the ball from Conor Gallagher, nutmegged Fabian Schar, and then rounded Martin Dubravka before putting the ball into the back of the Newcastle net.

Jacob Murphy grabbed one back late on, but it was too late for the visitors. And that is how it stayed, with Chelsea winning 3-2 on the night. Below, Bobby Vincent rates each one of the Chelsea players.

Djordje Petrovic – Looked good on the ball; as if he was told to be a bit braver with his decision-making. Unfortunately, there was nothing he could do about the goal on the brink of half-time or the late strike from Murphy. —*AP*

MI WOMEN VS RCB WOMEN

Royal Challengers Bangalore bowler Ellyse Perry celebrates the wicket of Mumbai Indians batter Pooja Vastrakar **PHOTO: PTI**

Perry's all-round show guides RCB past Mumbai

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Royal Challengers Bangalore, riding on Ellyse Perry's best-ever bowling figures in the history of the Women's Premier League, defeated Mumbai Indians by seven wickets to make it to the playoffs in the Women's Premier League match here on Tuesday.

Perry snapped six for 15 runs as RCB dismissed Mumbai Indians for 113 runs.

The Australian allrounder then struck an unbeaten 40 and shared a 76-run stand with Richa Ghosh (36 not out) to take RCB to the winning score of 115 for 3 in just 15 overs.

A wonderful extension of arms and that was a massive hit from Rich over the long-on, and this time she has decided to finish the job. Nothing great could have happened; Perry with six wickets and an unbeaten 40 off 38 balls, has taken RCB over the line by seven wickets.

Brief scores: Mumbai 113 in 19 overs (Hayley Matthews 26, Sajeevan Sajana 30; Ellyse Perry 6/15) lost to Royal Challengers Bangalore 115 for 3 in 15 overs (Ellyse Perry 40 not out, Richa Ghosh 36 not out).

—*PTI*